CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

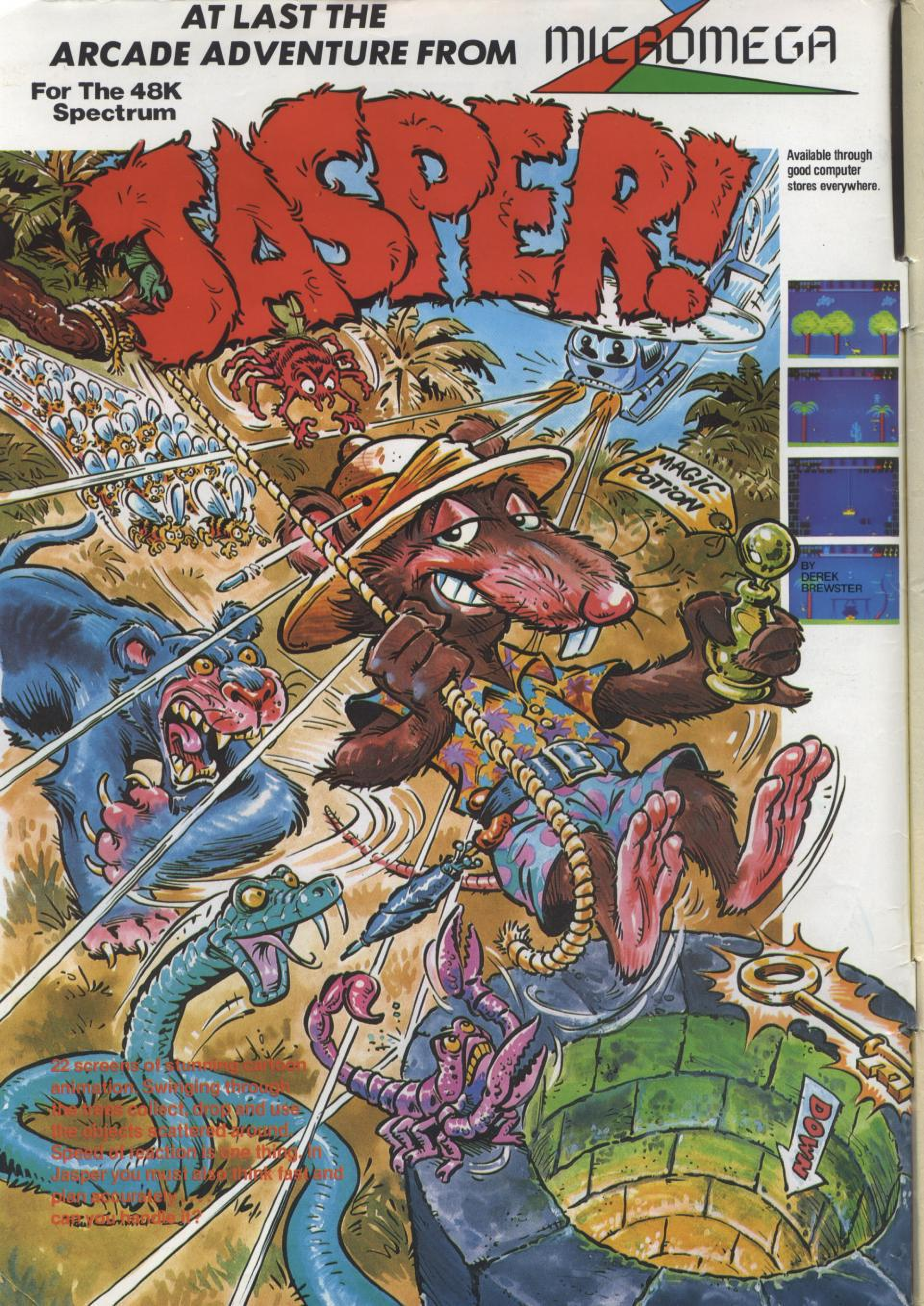
No.11 DECEMBER 1984
85p

Crash Smash

- **STARSTRIKE** REALTIME
- **TURMOIL** BUG-BYTE
- **SIR LANCELOT** MELBOURNE HOUSE
- **OUT OF THE SHADOWS** MIZAR
- **DARK STAR** DESIGN-DESIGN
- **TIR NA NOG** GARGOYLE
- **SKOOLDAZE** MICROSPHERE



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CRASH

MICRO GAMES ACTION

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Cover by Oliver Frey

This issue of CRASH is dedicated to the memory of **Francois Truffaut**, the French film director who died of cancer on Sunday 21st October. Truffaut will probably be best remembered for his acting appearance in *Close Encounters of the Third Kind*, but his real gift to the world has been the series of marvellous films he has made. To many of the CRASH team, he has long been a hero. We will miss him.

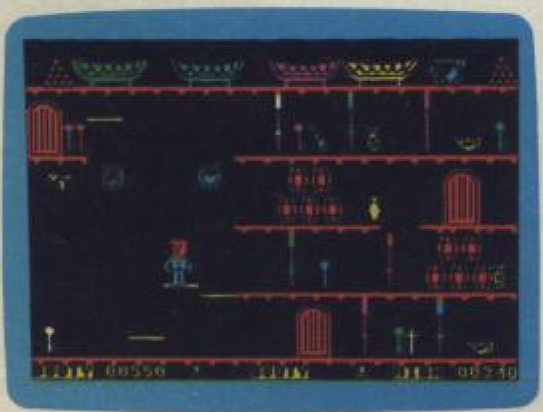
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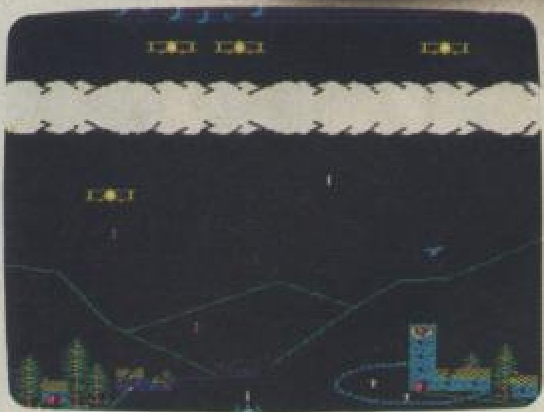
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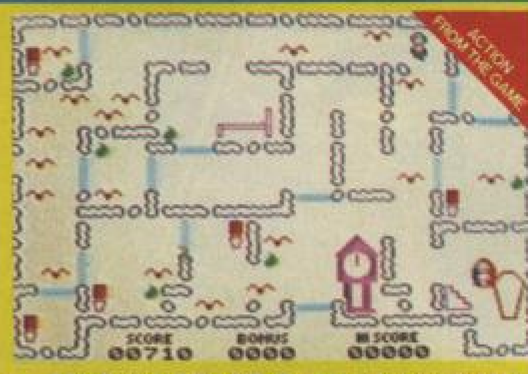
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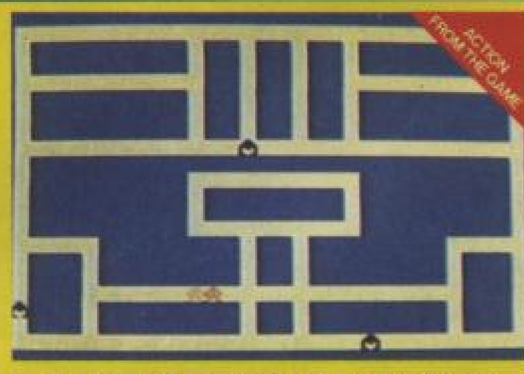
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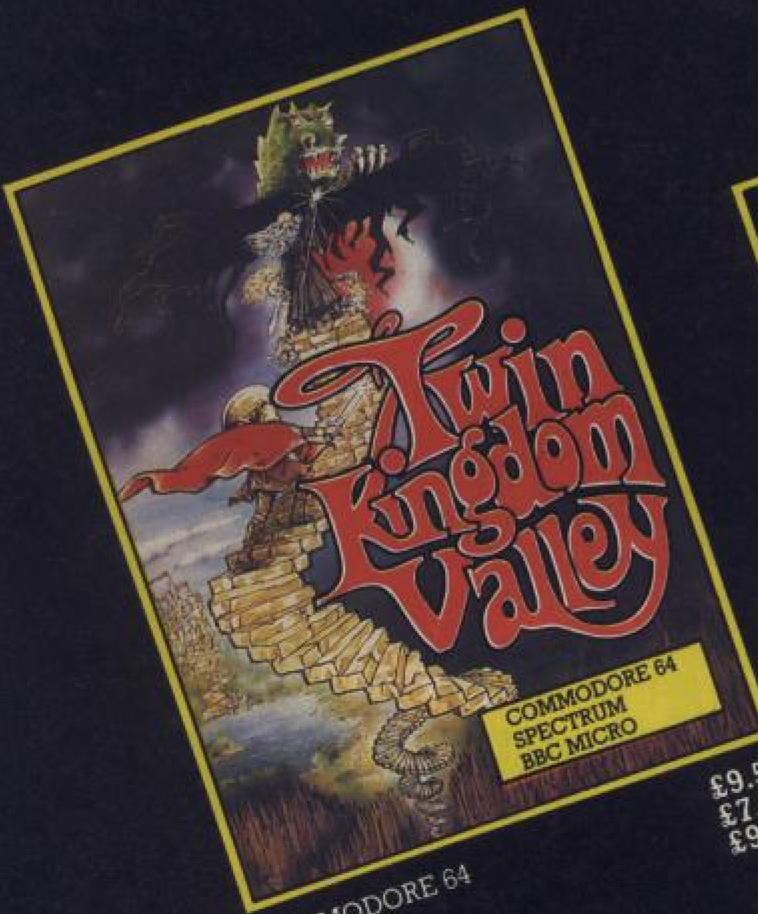


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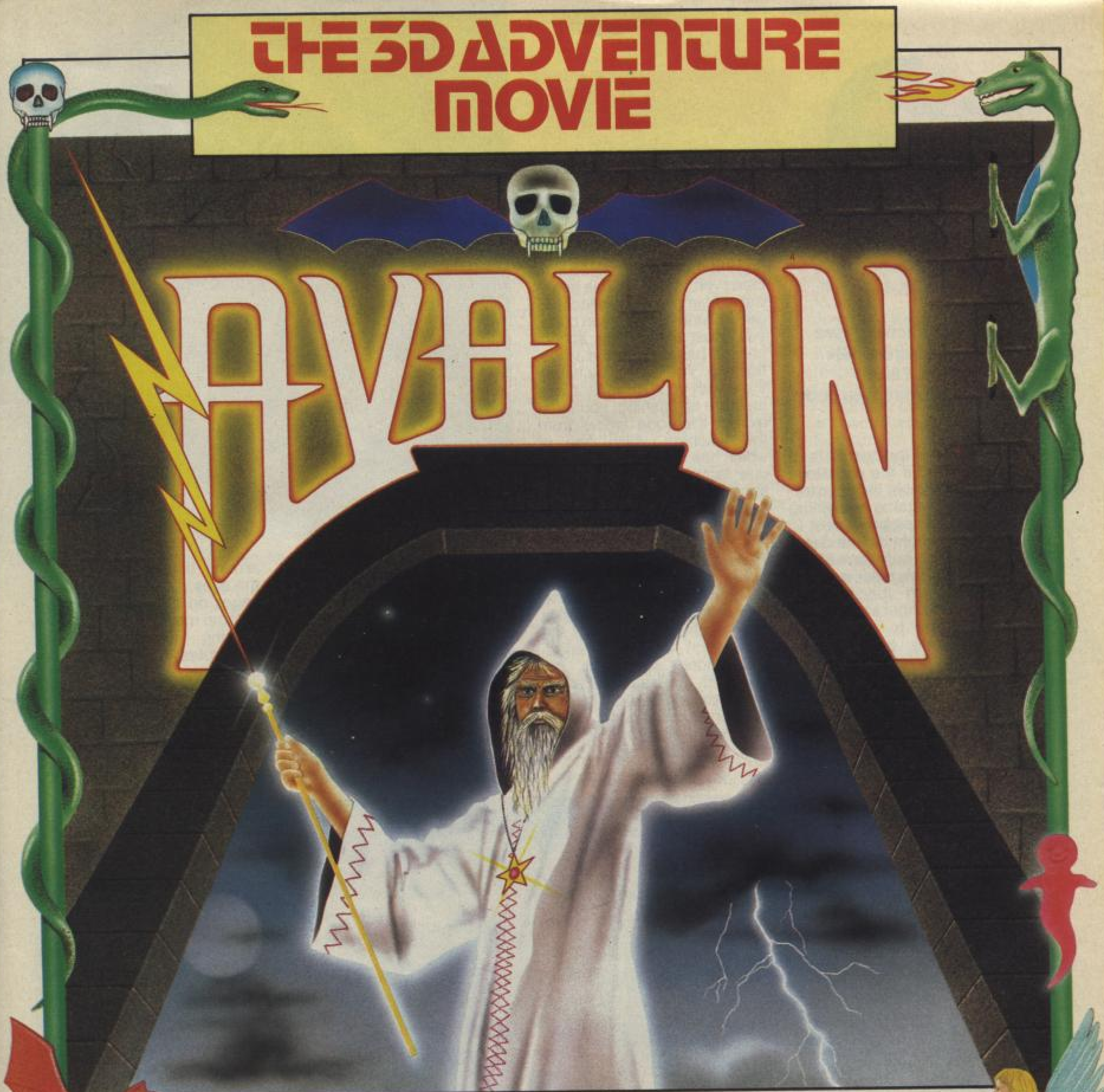
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SKOOL DAZE

Producer: **Microsphere**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author:

Skool Daze is the best daze of your life and if the gratuitous violence possible in this extraordinary new game is anything to go by, it is probably best to go through them all in a daze! The nefarious hero (or is he an anti-hero) of this piece is called Eric, although the program allows you to input a new name if you prefer to personalise your software, and you can change the names of the other 'actors' in this play. 'play' and 'actors' are apt words in this game, for it carries on its own life regardless of what you are doing, in fact the demo alone is like watching 'Grange Hill' on the telly!

The simple object of *Skool Daze* is to get the end of term report out of the headmaster's safe, so suppressing the appalling information contained in it. However, achieving this aim is not so simple. In essence, to get the safe combination code, you must set all the school shields hanging on the walls, flashing. You do this by hitting them with your catapult. Once they are all flashing, you must extract the code letters from the teachers, each one of which has been entrusted with one letter. This is done by knocking them over. All except the history master who, because of his advanced age, has had his code letter implanted in his brain by hypnosis.

The methods to be used to set shields flashing, knock over teachers and extract the information are very varied, and typically school-like. But even with the codes, all is not over, because Eric must try out all the combinations on a blackboard. And even with the safe accessed safely, Eric must then cover his tracks by stopping all the shields from flashing by the same method he used to start them.



This may all sound involved and fun, and it is, but the bare bones of the plot don't even begin to explain how hard the task is made by the ants nest building of a school! It swarms with kids and teachers, the former milling innocently around, bopping each other in the eyes, scrawling rude messages on the blackboard, tripping up masters and generally causing havoc to Eric's edeavours; the latter handing out lines, ringing bells to change classes, asking daft educational questions, and generally being just like school teachers. Quite honestly, the Department of Education





S·K·O·O·L D·A·Z·E

should have this game suppressed before it really causes trouble. . .

CRITICISM

● '*Skool Daze* takes me back a bit, to the good old days - school days. This incredible 3D school time game has many features associated with school, such as 'Whacker' - the teacher that is out to get you with his cane. The object of the game is quite easy although achieving the objective is very difficult, and this seems to add very well to the playability of the game. Among the many things I like, two things that stand out are - the catapult action, where your missile if fired at the back of someone's head, promptly knocks that person down, with the victim scratching his head - and the fact that there is no character disruption when the figures pass in front of the background. Colour, sound and the general idea are all exceptionall good. I think this will provide many hours of joyful skool daze.'

● 'Skool Daze *is a fun game to play. The graphics are excellent and the sound is good. You are set an enormous task, which I have only just started. Most of the shields are much too high to reach, and all the teachers are line-happy. When ever you do anything and there is a teacher near you, the teacher will shout remarks at you. I really enjoyed playing this game and recommend it to everyone with a sense of mischief.*'

● 'From the moment you see *Skool Daze*, you fall in love with it, because the graphics are tremendous. The whole playing area is alive with action. The cast of characters is presented in a long menu which introduces each recognisable graphic, tells you who they are and their names, and allows you to change them if you want. The game has the feeling of an animated comic strip with the teachers' and pupils' comments all appearing in balloons. Playing the game requires a lot of attention to keep up with everything that is going on, and even if you don't feel up to a day at school, you can always sit back and watch it happen around you on the excellent demo. Microsphere seem to have a knack of finding unusual themes for games, and this is no exception. They also find the great graphics to go with it. I can't imagine anyone being disappointed with *Skool Daze*.

COMMENTS

Control keys: cursors or Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, plus; S for sit/stand, H for hit, W for write, J/L jump/leap and O or F for fire
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: very responsive
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: excellent - it seems an inadequate word
Sound: very good, good tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
Screens: scrolling school building
Special features: masked character graphics
General rating: excellent value, plenty to do, addictive, unusual.

Use of computer	92%
Graphics	93%
Playability	95%
Getting started	92%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	94%
Overall	**93%**





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THINKING AHEAD

AS I WRITE THIS, we are plunged in the gloom of a rainy mid-October day, but thinking ahead to the pleasures of Christmas, wondering whether it is going to be a boomer or a bummer for everyone involved in the business of computer games. The point I'm making about having to think ahead, is that it is one thing the software industry at large doesn't seem to do very effectively. In almost all other areas of sales, it is accepted that you must have product ready for review (whether by magazines or chain store buyers) months and months in advance. For example let's assume that CRASH wanted to sell a 1985 calendar through the larger shops. It would have had to be printed and delivered to the shops by August 1984, which would mean commencing design work on it in June at the latest. But it would have had to be negotiated (which requires a fully printed dummy) before Christmas 1983 to ensure good sales back up. Which means if we want to do a 1986 calendar, we would have to be 'selling' it to the shops' buyers as an idea NOW.

Yet software houses, desperately keen to make a good thing of the Christmas period, all go and release games at the same time, and only one or two months, at the most, before Christmas. They all expect - or certainly hope - to get them reviewed well in time to entice customers to buy them. Now if 50 software houses each release an average of 3 games in October and November, there is no way it is possible to get all 150 reviewed before Christmas - and indeed, with shop shelf space at a premium, it is unlikely that all of them will even get into the shops in the first place unless they have concluded negotiations way ahead of time.

It's natural that everyone should want to release games at the same time before Christmas, but it is a pity that they all assume magazines will get them reviewed in time. A little forward planning (that favourite phrase for strategy game players) would result in games being ready for preview from mid-summer on, thus ensuring a reasonable amount of time for reviewers to get to grips with them all.



GAMES REVIEWED IN THIS ISSUE



ON THE INCREASE

CARRYING ONfrom the above piece, Christmas may be the boom time, but summer is the slump time, not only in the computer field, but generally. Magazines, especially, tend to drop in sales throughout the summer months. But I am pleased to be able to say that this has not happened with CRASH. In fact, recent figures have shown that CRASH is one of very few magazines (of all types) that has actually increased its sales over the summer and we are now well ahead of many in the field.

SPECTRUM

I'VE NEVER thought of myself as a prophet, so I was taken by surprise as much as everyone else when Sinclair Research released information about the new **ZX Spectrum** (and the machine at the same time!) only a few days after the last issue went to press containing an editorial which suggested that Sinclair should do something to upgrade the Spectrum. However, if it *was* prophesy, then it was inefficient prophesy, because Sinclair have really done nothing to upgrade the Spectrum beyond giving it a professional typewriter style keyboard, thus confirming their attitude to the machine that they do *not*see it as a games machine. Nothing has been done about the sound or colour attribute problems associated with the video display.

Whilst a more solid keyboard is to be appreciated, it is worth noting that you are effectively paying £50 for it - £5 more than, say, the DK'Tronics keyboard, which is also microdrive compatible. It's true that Sinclair are giving away a little over £50 worth of software with the new computer, but they are doing the same with the old version. Fortunately, this lack of change also means that they have done little to upset the market balance for manufacturers of Spectrum peripherals (except Keyboard manufacturers), many of which have helped to make the Spectrum the best-selling machine in Britain.

It seems to me to be an oddly half-hearted decision, rather like a car manufacturer who decides to give a model a new lease of life by putting it inside a restyled body shell. So it seems that the Spectrum owner is still to be denied the true delights of white noise explosions - the one real step forward that could have been made easily enough and at reasonable cost - in exchange for the clatter of hard keys. For myself - I'd kinda got used to the satisfyingly 'squelchy' feel of the old membrane keys. . .

CHRISTMAS SPECIAL

AND GETTING RIGHT TO CHRSITMAS, our next issue (on sale December 13) is called the **Christmas Special**. As I've said before, it is effectively the January issue, but on sale well in time for Christmas, and should fill in a few of those more boring moments during the holiday period. I've lost count of the prize value offered in numerous competitions! The CRASH reviewing team is getting together next week to put together two articles, one looking back over the year, and the other looking forward to what we might expect next year. Additionally, there is another article about CRASH itself. We have received several letters enquiring about how CRASH is put together each month, and there seems to be a general interest in the subject. Lots of readers may assume magazines sort of 'happen', without realising how much effort is needed, and people, to make it just 'happen'. This article will 'blow the lid off' and reveal the inside story! And of course, there will be reviews, the grand slam Valley of Slime, POKEs Corner, and many other tit bits.

SOFTWARE PIRATES

IT ISN'T THE FIRST TIME that magazines have taken the attitude that if software houses want the public to cease pirating software, then they must put their own house in order first. I'm not sure I go along entirely with the argument that this includes versions of versions of well known games. After all, if we really stuck strictly to the difinition of 'originality', then (in writing) most novels would never have been written. There are only a few ideas in the world - the trick is to rehash them in new ways and relate the idea differently to life. So with computer games; just because one version of a game is original, it doesn't mean it can't be bettered. And where do you draw the line between what is a 'copy' and what is something different that has nevertheless used elements of a well known game type?

Where I do feel some software houses have been in a dodgy area is when they do use copyrighted material illegally. It isn't a Spectrum game, but **Mastertronic** have been forced to withdraw their game *Chiller* because it used the music *Thriller* by Michael Jackson as backing. This was done without first obtaining a licence from **Rocksoft**, the sole exclusive agent for the original publisher of the song. As a result of legal proceedings, Mastertronic have been forced to withdraw the game and make what is described as a 'substantial' out of court settlement.

It is all too easy in a world where two wrongs *are*thought to make a right, to see that games buyers are going to argue that if *they* can try it on - so can we.

ADVERTISERS INDEX

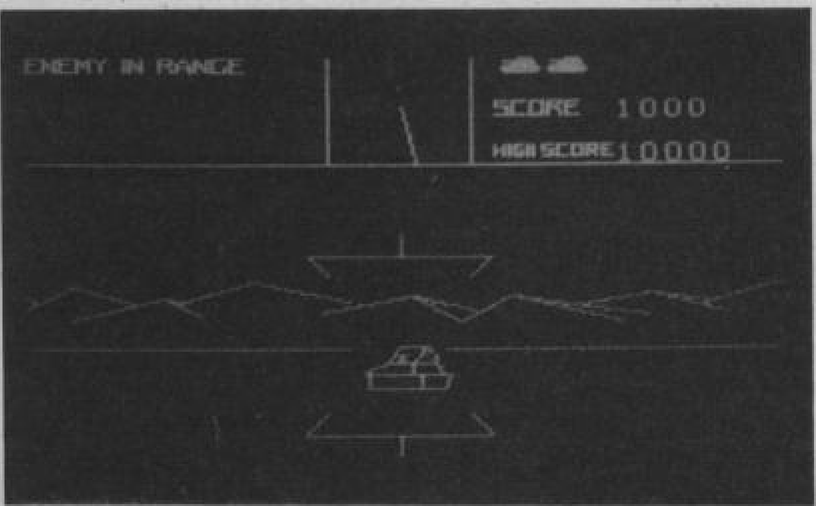
BATTLEZONE

Producer: **Quicksilva**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **Machine code**
Author: **Bill Witts**

'The Official Atari approved version of the popular arcade game. Insist on the original version, accept no substitutes,' shouts the inlay of *Battlezone*. Very little other detail is given on the inlay (although the loading screen helpfully informs you that instructions and keyboard controls will be given immediately after the auto-run demo). What has happened to the justly famed Quicksilva absurd scenario? Is this lack an indication that Atari didn't approve or a case that under their new masters (ASP) Quicksilva have taken a turn for the serious? In any event it seems a shame, and an indication of Atarian sluggishness, that one of their most popular arcade games should be converted to a home micro in time to be at the tail end of a whole series of similar games.

Battlezone surely requires no introduction (serious one that is). The Spectrum version comes complete with tanks, flying saucers and missiles and uses the keyboard to simulate caterpillar track movement, which is to say that the two top quarters control forward movement on left and right tracks, while the two bottom quarters control reverse movement on left and right tracks. This means that you can move forward or backward in a straight line, turn slowly or spin faster on the spot by using opposed quarters diagonally.

The screen display shows a mountainous backdrop (including an unanimated volcano) with a few objects here and there which may be used as shields. Above the viewscreen is the radar, an indication of enemy to the left or right, whether the enemy is in range, and the score lines.



It's nice to know that when you blow one up, the tank has been officially Atari-approved in BATTLEZONE.

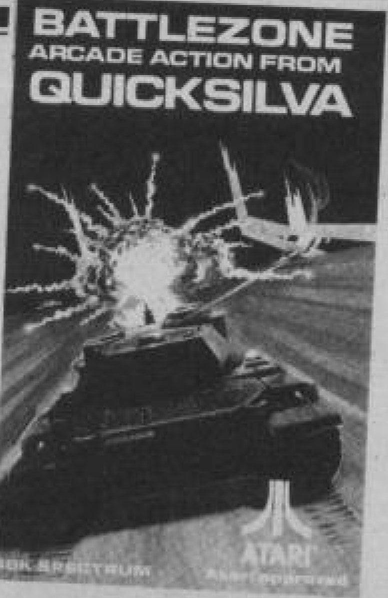
CRITICISM

● 'Atari have let QS do this official version. It's a good version, but there are already good versions available. I feel all *Battlezone* fans will have alreeady got a good version of this; and as this is no better, there is hardly any need to get it. On the other hand, if you haven't got one yet, then you couldn't go far wrong here. I found this version to be rather playable.'

● *'Finally an Atari game for the Spectrum, but it's only Atari approved, not Atari made. The graphics are up to the arcade original standard, and the colours are the same - so making it a little dull to look at. The game features some nice touches like when the credits appear at the beginning of the game. This is a good 'Battlezone' game but I still feel Realtime's* Tank Duel *is better, containing better colour and detailed backgrounds which this game lacks - and this one's more expensive too. Overall - good, and the real McCoy.'*

CRITICISM

● 'Wire frame graphic games either turn you on, or they don't. There aren't all too many variations on the theme and there have been quite a few already on the Spectrum, so it seems odd to me that Quicksilva should have chosen to release this, the officially approved version of



Battlezone, right now. As a game on its own merits it is a good one. I like the fact that the tanks etc. appear as soon as you have destroyed the previous one - there's none of that hanging around waiting for another target. The game alsdo builds up nicely with the first few tanks being easy to hit, but they get cleverer and nastier as time goes by. The graphics are neat, if uninteresting looking, and they move smoothly enough, though not always fast enough for my taste. Yes, it's a good version but its Official stamp from Atari doesn't do anything special for it.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: left track: 1-5 & Q-T forward - A-G & CAPS-V reverse. Right track: 6-9 & Y-P forward - J-ENTER & B-SPACE reverse, with zero to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: layout works well, positive
Use of colour: just green and purple
Graphics: quite good line graphics, reasonably smooth
Sound: continuous, above average
Skill levels: 1 with some progressive difficulty
Lives: 3
Screens:
Special features:
General rating: good, although a little pricey considering there are other cheaper versions which are as good.

Use of computer	76%
Graphics	77%
Playability	72%
Getting started	78%
Addictive qualities	70%
Value for money	70%
Overall	**74%**

MADHATTER

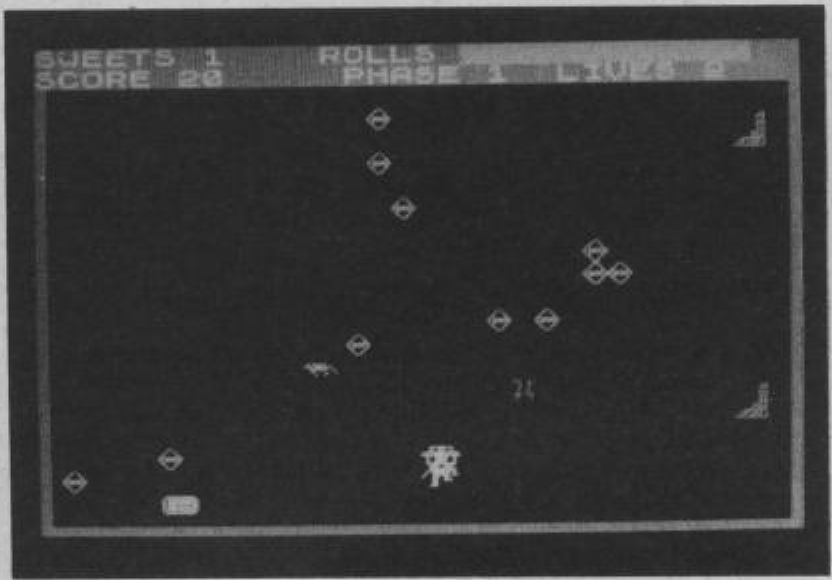
Producer: **Gamma Software**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.50**
Language: **Machine code**
Author: **Simon Johnson**



Madhatter is a game which has little if anything to do with *Alice in Wonderland*. The title is very much an excuse for a simple idea. The scenario seems mad enough; it's the Madhatter's Un-Birthday and some friends are supposed to be coming for tea. Unfortunately the place is in a dreadful mess and must be tidied up. The mess seems to be made from sweets and chocolate rolls, the very things he needs for the tea. The object of the game is go around picking up ten sweets for each roll and hitting the top of the screen. Each time you do this a roll appears in the score line and after five have appeared you go onto the next screen. The unpleasant side of life here are the mice, which steal sweets (and don't forget you need ten sweets for every roll), the vacuum cleaner on the right of the screen which kills on contact, and other objects which fly across at random, also killing. And that's about it.

CRITICISM

● 'This is one of those rush around the screen and grab the goodies games! The graphics are a little flickery but fast. The appeal of getting the



Delectable looking sweeties and oozing chocky rolls dart across the screen of MADHATTER.

sweets plus a chocky roll soon wears thin, making this one of those average to fair type games.'

● *'You've got the speed, you've got the maneouverability, you've even got the brains but why can't you get off that screen? This is about the most infuriating game I have ever played. The graphics are nothing special and there is only one screen. The game type is more or less out of date now - all you do is run around (very fast) and collect things while avoiding the nasties.'*

● *'Madhatter* can be summed up as one of those games that might be worth buying at a budget price. It has very little to offer in terms of being exciting or even very skillful, since all you have to do is dodge and collect. We've seen this sort of thing many times before. The graphics are rather small, a bit jerky and lacking in detail or interest. Not really worth it.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, N/M left/right
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: average responsiveness, sensible keys
Use of colour: average
Graphics: jerky, on the small side
Sound: not bad
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 1
Special features:
General rating: an old fashioned looking game with nothing much to hold the interest.

Use of computer	**57%**
Graphics	**48%**
Playability	**52%**
Getting started	**58%**
Addictive qualities	**42%**
Value for money	**48%**
Overall	**51%**

PIROMANIA

Producer: **Automata UK**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.00**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **C. Goodwin**

Automata Towers, that well known TV series, is on fire, and all the residents are threatened with flame out, a sizzling end to another fine day in towerblock suburbia. It's all the fault of that little cult, the Piman, whose soaring star has fueled the flames. Your task is to help Walter Hose put out the flames and save the inhabitants from becoming barbecued spare ribs. Despite his name, Walter has only a fire bucket and taps to help, unless he can get to the fire extinguisher. The method is to grab the bucket and run to the nearest tap, fill the bucket and then douse the flames which are breaking out all over the place. A bucket full will do the trick for a few fires, but it needs to be replenished frequently. Care must be taken to ensure a needy tap isn't isolated by burned out staircases. Being a gentle bunch, some residents actually keep dynamite, and this should be removed to safety as quickly as possible!

There are also fire extinguishers to use, a pink elephant which dances beautifully, and doors which may be used to avoid the worst of burns. Points are scored for inhabitants and valuables saved.

CRITICISM

● 'Piromania will obviously not be an epic, but it is quite a good idea and is very playable. It gets infuriating, especially when the piromaniac comes along and starts the fires again. If you leave a fire burning it will spread around all the building and eventually burn through the floors. I haven't found any dynamite, which is a surprise, as I got quite far with the game. I quite enjoyed it, and it will probably have lasting interest for me.'

● *'I don't think I've ever seen a game quite like this - it's certainly different. The idea is so simple even a moron could play this game, just get your bucket, fill it with water and put the fire out. Saying this, the game does have a little more content than just puttiing a fire out. I must say, it gets ever so frantic and panicky on the higher levels - and whatever is a pink elephant doing in a house?! One niggle about the game is that Walter is a bit over-responsive, or perhaps it's him just making a frantic dash to put the fire out, and he slides as he comes to a stop. Nevertheless, I found this game very playable and very enjoyable, but I don't know whether to recommend it, except for its sheer simplicity of play. A good family game.'*



● 'Piromania is a fairly original platform game. The graphics are not very large, but they work well. The game has that quality that tends to make it addictive. Quite a few control keys are required, even with a joystick. Overall, I would say this 'hot' number is quite hottish.'

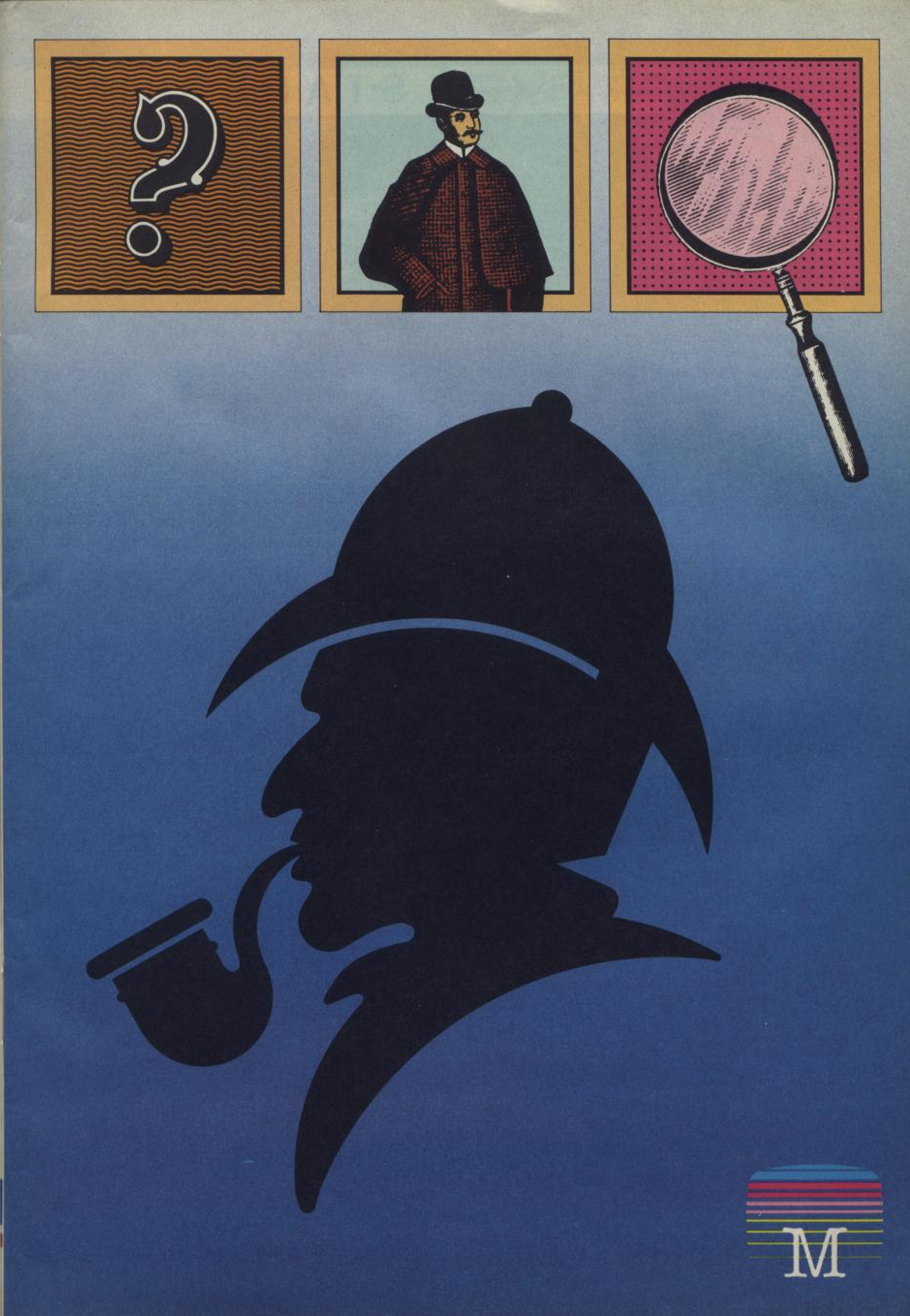
COMMENTS

Control keys: left/right - alternate keys bottom row, Q-P/A-ENTER up/down, numerics to use an object, BREAK to drop, CAPS to open/close door
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: reasonable layout despite handful, responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: although small, generally good, animated and good looking fires
Sound: fair
Skill levels: 1 with progressive difficulty
Lives: 3
Screens:
Special features:
General rating: an unusual game, with high playability and reasonably addictive.

Use of computer	**69%**
Graphics	**71%**
Playability	**72%**
Getting started	**67%**
Addictive qualities	**72%**
Value for money	**72%**
Overall	**70%**

Walter Hose finds himnself in a hot situation when the Piman becomes a PIROMANIAC.





S·T·A·R·S·T·R·I·K·E

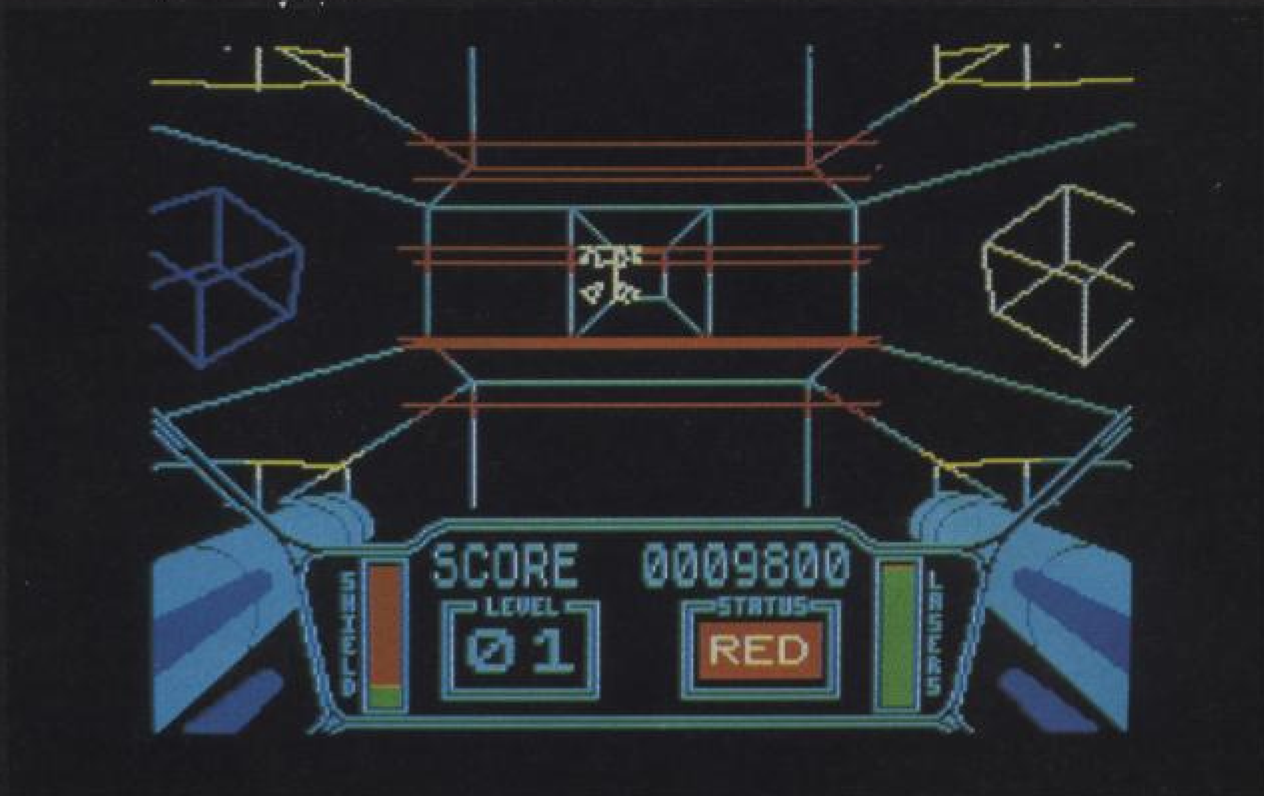
STARSTRIKE

Producer: **Realtime**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Ian Oliver, Andrew Onions, Graeme Baird**

Realtime's second game, following their popular *Tank Duel* is another wire frame 3D game, set in space. This is one of the new generation of wire frame games for the Spectrum, with fast moving coloured graphics. There are basically three different screens to play through, linked with computer 'tacticals' and culminating in a grand 'finale' scene. In the first section you are in the furthest reaches of space, fighting numerous alien fighter craft, which hurl powerful plasma bolts at you. The object is to destroy as many enemy as you can by firing at them with the twin lasers, but it is also essential to destroy the plasma bolts as well to survive.

The second screen takes place on a battle planet, covered with a variety of towers. Some of them are armed, indicated by their yellow tops, and these also fire plasma bolts at your craft. Surviving through this screen takes you onto the third, and down into the trench. The trench has laser blisters on its side, which fire at you. Again it is important to destroy the bolts as well as the blisters. The trench is criss-crossed with transverse bridges and side towers, which must be dodged by weaving in and out of them. At the end of the trench is a protective forcefield, through which you must fly. But to disable the field, the two rotating cubes to either side must be shot out of the way. Failure to do so, will result in your being forced back into the trench again. If you get through unharmed, then you are shot into space and you see the planet behind explode, before going onto the next difficulty level.

The screen shows the status panel of your craft with the view beyond. The instruments show shield status and laser status, levels and score. The lasers overheat rapidly and take time to recharge. Shields are damaged by hitting enemy craft, towers, trench walls etc. , as well as the enemy plasma bolts.

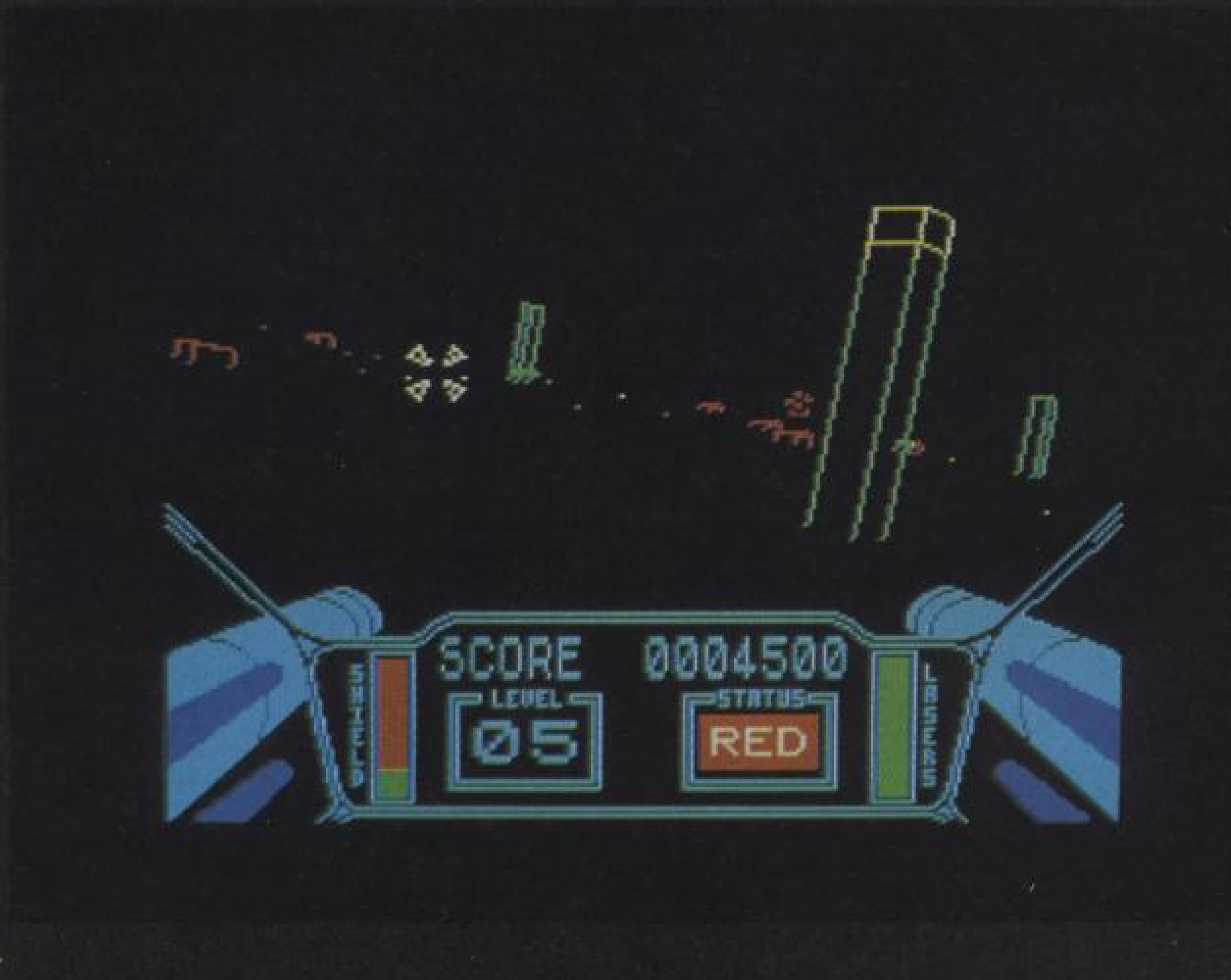


Shooting away the cubes to get through the forcefield

CRITICISM

● 'I was privileged to see the first ever 'tests' the programmers produced for this game, where you could see them 'playing' about with the ideas now contained in it. These were just space ships flying around in space. I was asked, at the time, whether I approved of this type of graphics. It looked as though it was going to be the beginning of a marvellous game. Seeing the finished product now, the graphics have come a long, long way, maybe from the deepest, darkest depths of space itself. Although the game 'Star Wars' has been attempted to be copied many times in recent months on the Spectrum, none have really gone for the feeling and graphic presentation, instead they have added a gimmick to help sell the game, such as speed. This version definitely does have a great deal of

On the planet attacking the battle towers



graphic presentation, although wire frame, they are very detailed and well within the speed limits of a playable game. Colour has been used exceptionally well to add interest to the game with no tragic attribute problems. It must be pointed out that this game can be played quite easily by beginners with a skill level setting that increases with your skill, and does not just throw you in the deep end with a very difficult game to begin with. I think this is a big asset to any game. *Starstrike is a very addictive, playable mindless shoot em up - what the majority of arcade freaks love!'*

● *'This game is bound to be compared with* Dark Star *but they are two totally different games.* Dark Star *has its tremendous speed, but* Starstrike *goes in more for the graphical side of the game. It's the best 'Star Wars' type game to date, offering more playability that the arcade original with various extra screens and enemies added. It is very addictive and will offer hours of enjoyment to the arcade player, especially as it is a good hi-scoring game, more so than their earlier* Tank Duel. *It's instantly playable because it offers skill levels from total wally to arcade perfection.'*

● 'The first thing I liked about *Startrike* was the plasma bolts, nice big solid things that look real mean, and they spin as they come towards you, getting bigger and bigger. The space ships are also big and well detailed, and the explosions are great, the ships breaking up into their constituent parts before sailing away into space. The trench effect is exceptionally good 3D, and has you swaying in your seat as you weave between the towers and up over the bridges. On the planet, if you hit a tower, your craft goes into an 'out of control' spin momentarily, which just adds to the overall effect and realism. This is a pleasing and high-performing game.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q-T/A-G climb/dive, Y-I and H-K left, O-P and L-ENTER right, any bottom row to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: responsive and well laid out
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent 3D wire frame, smooth and large
Sound: continuous
Skill levels: 4 selectable but progressive up to and beyond 25
Lives: 1 with percentage of damage
General rating: excellent, addictive, playable and good value.

Use of computer	
Graphics	93%
Playability	96%
Getting started	91%
Addictive qualities	94%
Value for money	94%
Overall	**93%**

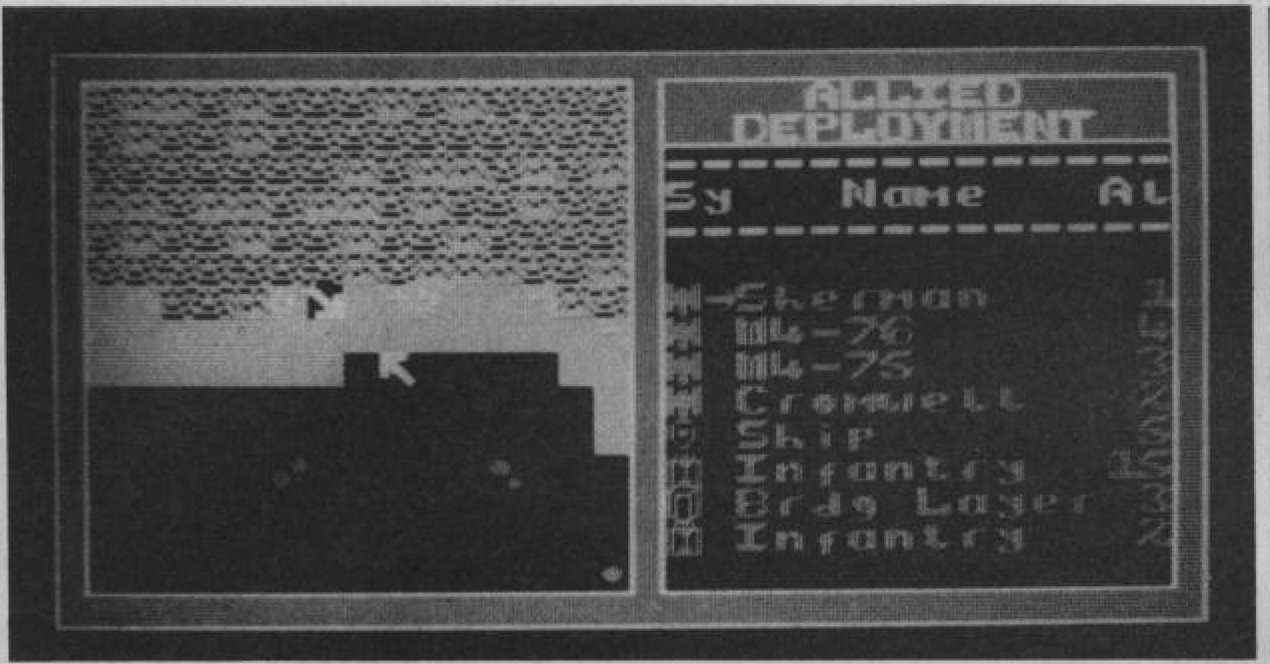
D-DAY

Producer: **Games Workshop**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **various**

Games Workshop have long been in the business of selling games across a wide range of interests. Now they have gone into software production with the aid, in this case of 'Demented Den, The Major, Macabre Mick and Einstein' and the corporate members of Dagenham Design Cell.

D-Day is a sophisticated wargame set in the Second World War for two players. It contains four scenarios, each accessed via its own loader. These are The Landing, The Breakout, Road to Arnhem, Arnhem Landing. The loader program asks which you would like to play, and then loads the appropriate Deployment program. In this stage the two players (Germans and Allies) deploy their forces' start positions on a map. The screen has two windows, map on the left, units and numbers to be deployed on the right. A cursor selects the unit, while a set of cursor keys then move two white arrows over the map terrain to where you want the unit placed. When all the units have been deployed, the second player deploys his or hers, and then the main program for the





selected scenario is loaded.

In play, the same screen layout is used, with messages and prompts appearing in the right window, units being moved by selection and the cursor system. The map of each scenario is quite large, the window only displays a small area, with the map scrolling over the total area as the cursor is moved. The map contains several terrain features such as, trees, rough ground, sea or lakes, grass, roads, buildings, sand, marshes, hedges and bridges over rivers. Logically, units may only be deployed or moved into terrain that is suitable, and the program takes account of movement speed depending on the terrain.

To win a scenario, you must defeat the enemy's forces. There are three values related to destruction - Attack, Defence and Range. These three affect how effective a shot on the oponent will be and can result in four states - Undamaged, Damaged, Wreck or Destroyed. The distinction between wreck and destroyed is that a wreck, though out of the action, is not removed and so prevents another unit from occupying the sqaure, whereas destroyed objects vanish altogether.

In firing, logic is employed. A unit may fire if nothing blocks its way like towns, trees or hedges, and if it is within range of the target. If all the parameters are met, then the cursor is placed over the firing unit and confirmed, before moving the cursor to the unit being fired upon. The graphics actually show the attack and resulting explosion. The damage report is then displayed. Howitzers and mortars are allowed to fire on targets even if terrain intrudes, because of the high trajectory of shot.

Since ships are very important in landings and on rivers, lakes etc. , there is a large section devoted to them in the manual. As they make a large difference to the outcome of any game, it is worth reading this section carefully.

The four scenarios each have different conditions for winning and varying amounts and types of units.

CRITICISM

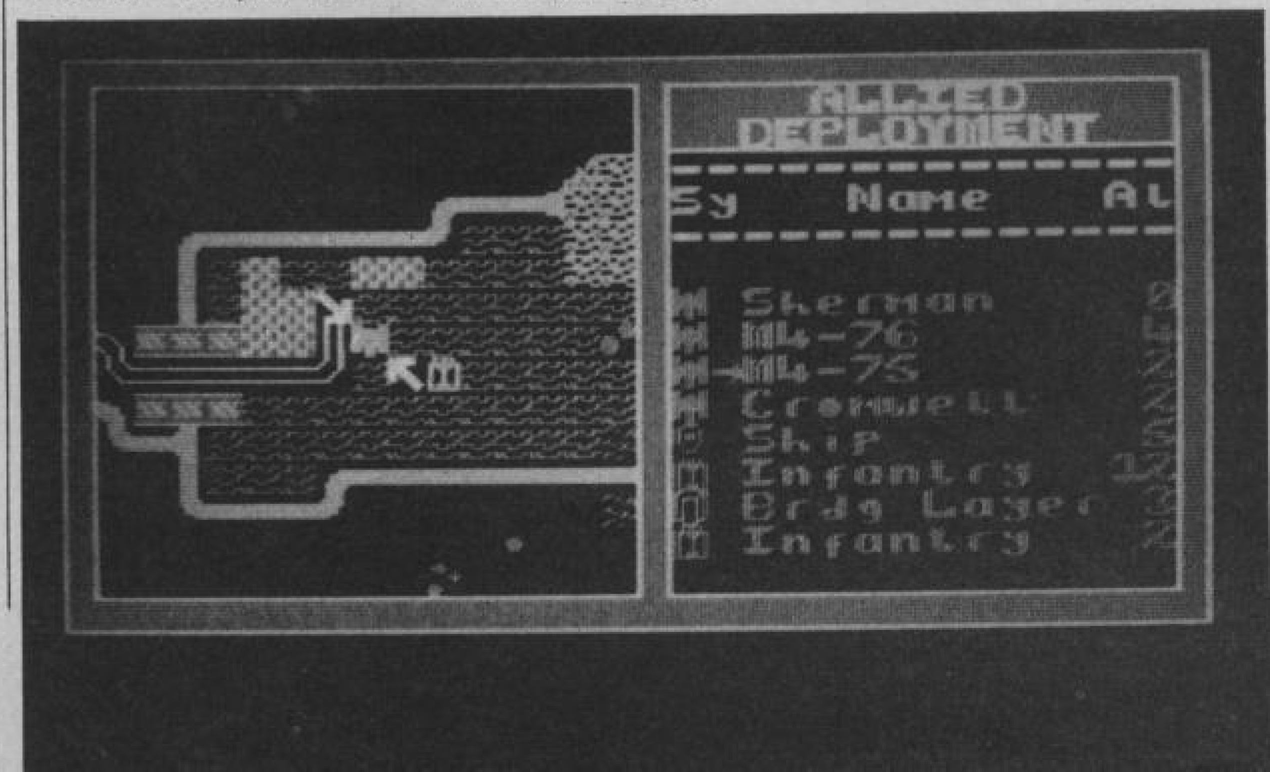
● 'When I first saw the graphics of this game after loading the deployment part of the program, I immediately thought of *Stonkers*, the Imagine wargame, because the graphics are not dissimilar - bright, sharp and quite large. I've seen plenty of wargames, and usually everything is small, cramped, indistinct and a pain on the eye. Not so with D-Day. *For once the graphic characters actually resemble recognisable things. The system of selection by cursor is very good and speeds the game up, especially as the cursor can itself be made to move at a faster speed - none of that entering all the grid references. Deployment takes quite a while, as is often the case in wargames, but it isn't just a boring prelude to playing the game - the positioning of troops and units is critical. But there is a useful auto-deployment mode. In general, the only drawback to D-Day that I can see yet is its two-player status which makes it difficult for a lone player, unbless he wants to play both sides - but that's hardly cricket, is it?'*

● *'Wargames have never been a strong point with me, and D-Day is another mammoth task with loads of setting up to do, and then when the game starts, a long time needs to be spent gradually manoeuvering all the units into battle position. On the other hand, the graphics are very good, and before I knew it, my partner and I were engrossed in The Landing. If* Stonkers*is called to mind, it is only in the sense that the graphics are as interesting and varied.* D-Day *is definitely a fully blown wargame for experts and lovers of strategy. As such it offers an enormous scope for playing and will probably do well in coresspondence games. The accompanying booklet is well laid out and clear to read. Also, an unusually, it is quite easy to understand. A very good game with plenty of potential. '*

COMMENTS

Control keys: uses 8 directional cursor movement with keys; Q/W/E;A/S/D;Z/X/C;
Joystick: none needed in this type of game
Keyboard play: cursor selection is very fast and positive
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: varied, detailed and clear, smooth scrolling over map
Sound:
Skill levels:
Lives:
Screens: four scenarios with scrolling
Special features: two-player only
General rating: an excellent and detailed wargame, with graphics to match - at last!

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	85%
Playability	87%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	N/A%
Value for money	88%
Overall	**83%**



PI-IN-ERE

Producer: Automata UK
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £6.00
Language: machine code
Author: Jason Austin

Burt has been miniaturised and injected into that favourite playland of so many programmers - a computer. His mission is to track down the Big Bug by tunnelling through areas of RAM, collecting all the objects in each memory location. There are a variety of minor bugs in each location. Red bugs have the power to tunnel after you, but the white, green and magenta bugs can only follow in your tunnels. Tunnelling under the edit keys, will cause them to fall, and if they fall on a bug, you send it back to its starting position and gain points. Lighting up the letters of the word EXTRA at the bottom of the screen gives you an extra life.



CRITICISM

● 'A very playable, frustrating and addictive game. All the graphics are neat and not jumpy like so many other games. Each screen has a faster, sometimes more intelligent, set of mini-bugs for you to squash or flee from. On each screen you must make up a routine which you should stick to, otherwise your tune will run out (you have roughly 1 minute and 55 seconds per screen). Every 10 screens there is a bonus screen which is near to impossible to complete. I really enjoyed playing *Pi-In-Ere*, even though it might be a little behind the times.'

● *'That super hero of super heroes, Burt, is back again in another Automata game. Burt is portrayed using very good graphics, the way he turns around is brilliant. The graphics are good, bright, colourful and amusing.* Pi-In-Ere *is a different yet playable game. Because there are 61 screens, don't worry about losing your last life on 59 and having to start again, as the game always starts from your last level.'*

● 'It's nice to see that Automata are producing some playable games for a change instead of games that are fun, but a bit pointless. *Pi-In-Ere* is a very original idea probably conceived from an arcade game along similar lines. Graphically, Burt is a marvellous character - he's very well animated, swivels round, moves up and down with his arms waggling - he looks so jolly and bouncy. This game has an incredible amount of screens although they don't vary very much, the bugs are



The start of the trouble in PI-IN-ERE, and the beginning of 61 screens of it.

different with every screen. They also look very jolly and snappy. You'll probably be able to play this game for a long time without getting bored with it, although after a while it may become tedious just collecting the objects needed to continue on to the next screen. Overall, a very colourful, jolly game - a trademark of Automata games - jolliness.'

Graphics: reasonable size, smooth and cheerful
Sound: good tunes and spot effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 61
General rating: good, playable and reasonably addictive.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type
Keyboard play: well placed and responsive
Use of colour: very good

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	81%
Playability	79%
Getting started	75%
Addictive qualities	75%
Value for money	76%
Overall	**77%**

BOUNCING BERTY/ ESKIMO CAPERS

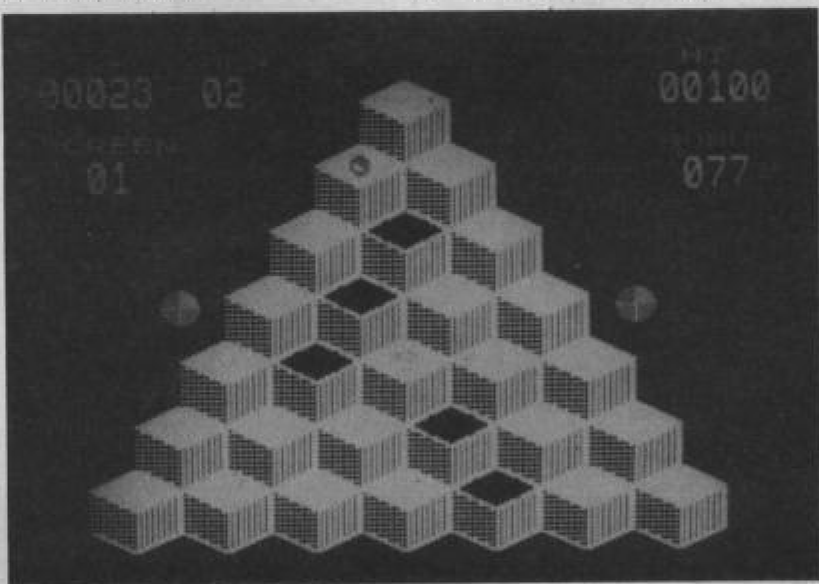
Producer: **Power Soft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail Price: **£3.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Ian Riachards**

Bouncing Berty is a 'Q-Bert' type game while *Eskimo Capers* is a 'Pengo' type game. The two come together on this budget-priced cassette. Neither game type needs much explanation. *Bouncing Berty* has the familiar seven-tier pyramid structure with one ball hazard on the first screens, but these increase as you progress, two balls, then the balls and a snake and so on. The other feature is the discs on either side of the tower onto which Berty can jump to escape to the top of the screen again.

Eskimo Capers has a rather small maze with the traditional blue ice blocks which can be burned away or fired in the direction of travel to squash any of the four bugs that might be in the way. There are also three red blocks which can be moved but not destroyed. There are four bugs on screen at one time but to get to the next screen, eight in all must be killed off, and these are shown at the base of the playing area.

CRITICISM

● *'Eskimo Capers* is a 'Pengo' type game, and not a very good version at that. Characters are tiny, just one character block, undetailed and insignificant. I think we passed this programming stage about ten centuries ago. The game itself is not overplayable for the simple reason that there are quite a few monsters to kill - 12 in all, counting the four already on screen at the start. This is quite easy until you are about to freeze the last one or two, because these whizz around the maze at an incredible speed, not giving you any chance to kill them whatsoever. *Bouncing Berty* is a fair version of 'Q-Bert' with quite a good 3D block effect. This game is exceptionally fast, too fast for me anyway, with three nasties out to get you it's almost unplayable at this stage. Taking into account the fact that more nasties will probably appear on later screens, the complement of difficulty and playabilty is totally ruined. Generally not really worth the money - probably better to to spend more money on two separate games of better quality.'



Graphically, not a bad 'Q-Bert' type game in BOUNCING BERTIE.

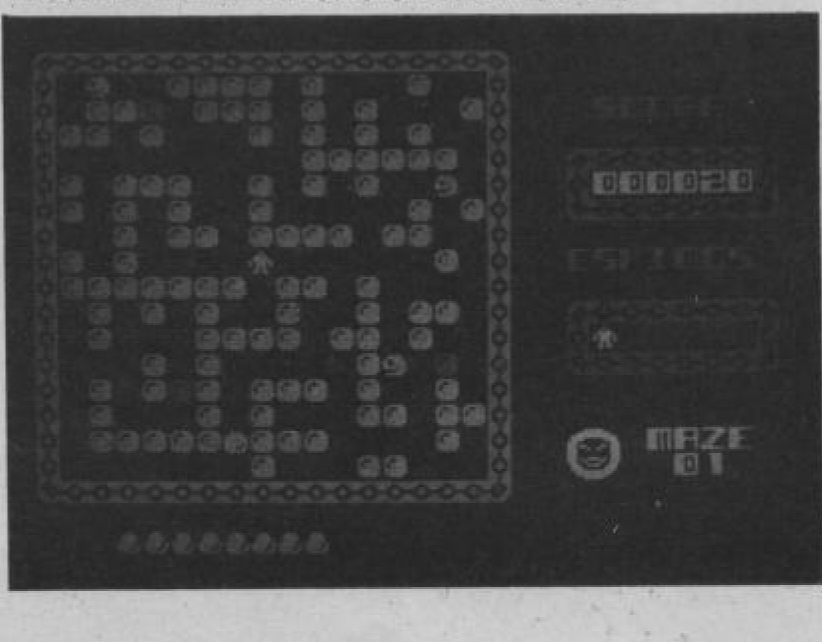
● 'Bouncing Berty *is not particularly good - the graphics are simple and overall the game is rather unaddictive.* Eskimo Capers *is a poor 'Pengo' with tiny, jerky graphics. Not much else to say really.'*

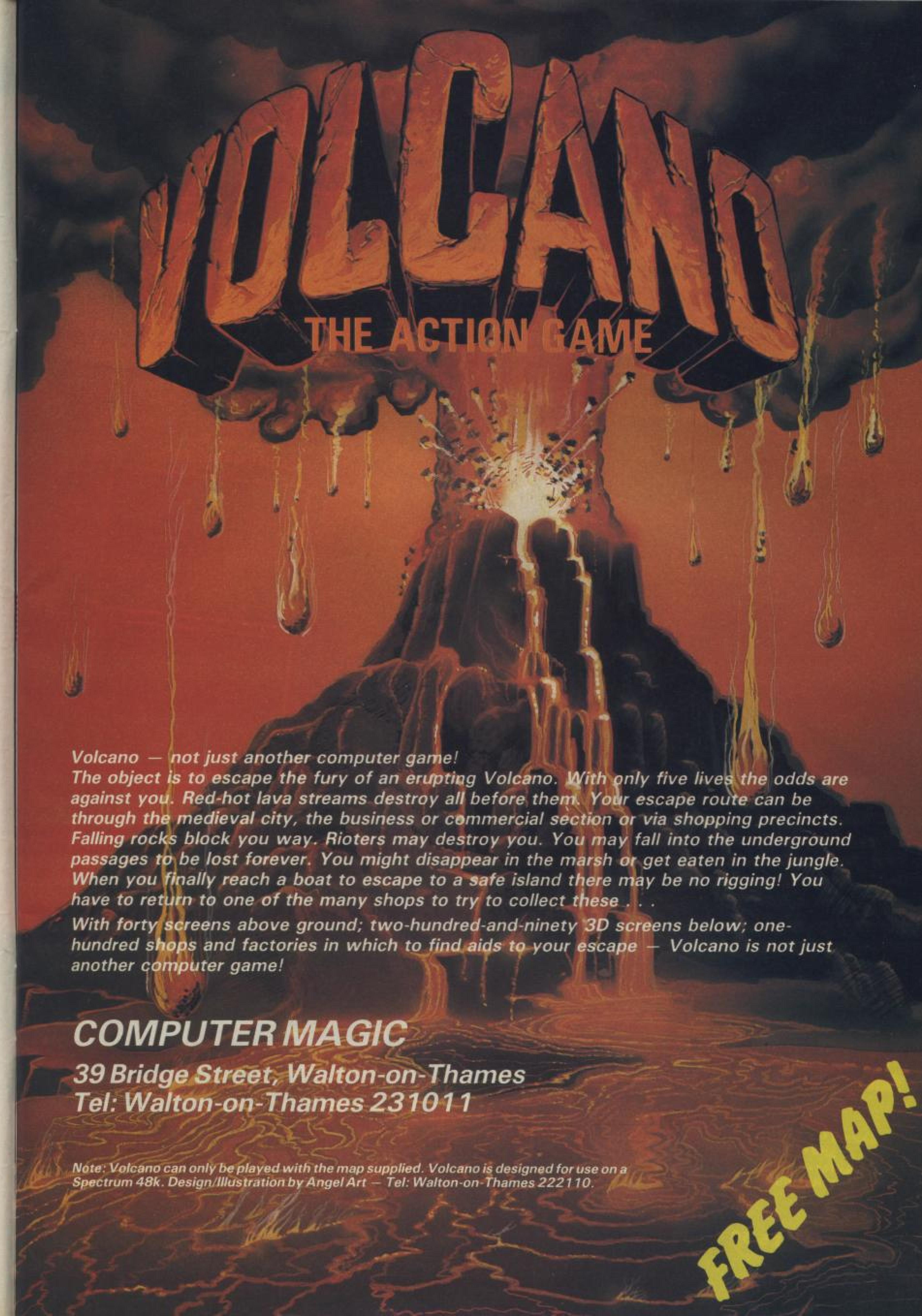
COMMENTS

Control keys: B. B. uses Q/A and P/L, E. C. uses an odd combination of 'shifted' cursors, actually the sinclair keys but used as cursors so 6/9 is left/right 7/8 is up/down with zero to fire
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: not very responsive
Use of colour: fair
Graphics: small, jerky and uninteresting, although in B. B. the pyramid works quite well
Sound: poor
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 1
General rating: generally poor to below average.

Use of computer	45%
Graphics	36%
Playability	28%
Getting started	25%
Addictive qualities	15%
Value for money	47%
Overall	**33%**

The large scoreline makes for a tiny playing area in ESKIMO CAPERS.




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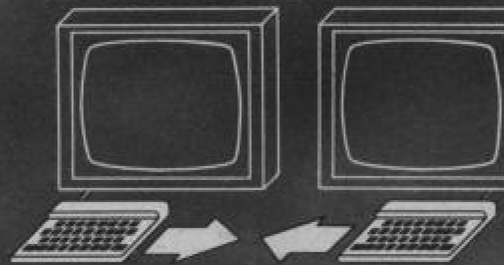
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You're flying the world's deadliest aircraft, however it would appear that your Command Centre has just sent you on the world's deadliest mission.
The ultimate in strategic action. This 100% machine code game offers the player two full graphic scrolling screens with over 30 levels of play.

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Delta Wing is an advanced flight combat simulator. It has been designed to give an excellent 'feel' for the tumble and roll of high speed flight. With 15 separate controls to monitor and incoming enemy planes to be dealt with, this program takes you and your Spectrum to the limits.
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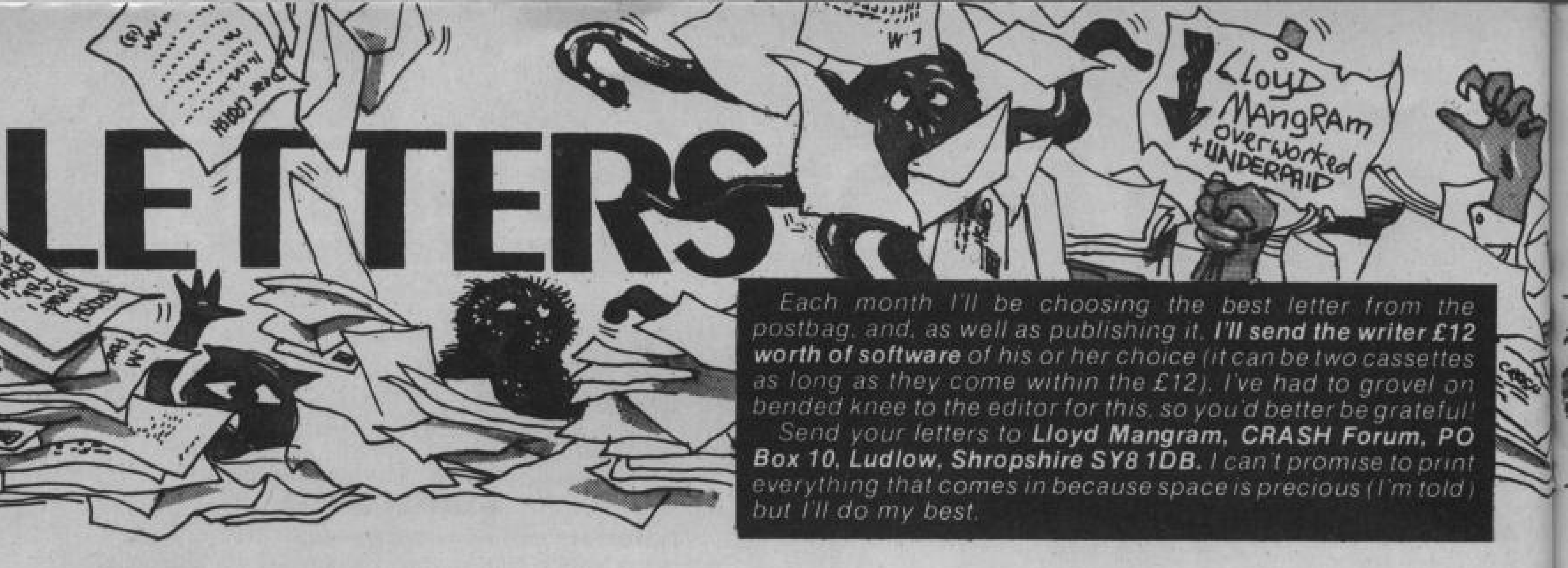
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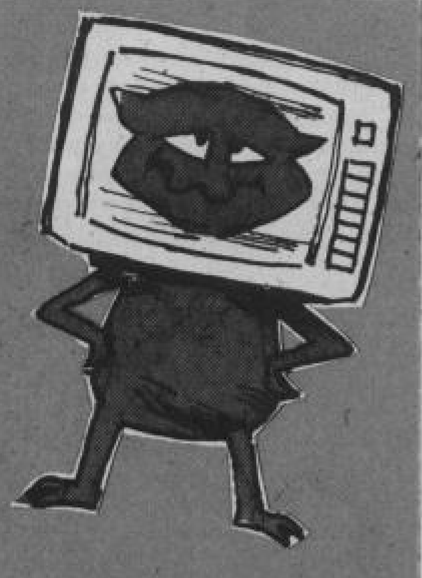
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LETTERS



Each month I'll be choosing the best letter from the postbag, and, as well as publishing it, ***I'll send the writer £12 worth of software*** *of his or her choice (it can be two cassettes as long as they come within the £12). I've had to grovel on bended knee to the editor for this, so you'd better be grateful!*
Send your letters to ***Lloyd Mangram, CRASH Forum, PO Box 10, Ludlow, Shropshire SY8 1DB.*** *I can't promise to print everything that comes in because space is precious (I'm told) but I'll do my best.*

IT'S OUR CHOICE



Dear Lloyd,
Excuse me while I beef a bit what's annoying me is a trend some largish software houses have taken to recently: Rather than spending time and money in an effort to produce innovative programs, these few have decided to devote their efforts to dressing-up fairly standard programs by incorporating well known characters from television. This is surely not a good direction to take, since it is merely drawing on the success of the characters in that medium. And it is an attempt to hide the program's true self, which is often a great deal less glamorous than the software houses in question would have us believe. I would hope that most software buyers would try out a game at first, and judge it on its merits, rather than be drawn by the incorporated character's fame. Thankfully this 'fast buck' method is not being implemented by very many software houses, and I hope will not persist unless the actual games at the core are improved.

On the subject of piracy, I would urge people not to make copies of any tapes. The attitude seems to be that it's 'okay' and 'anyway a few copies won't hurt!' This is false viewpoint. What you are doing if you make a copy is stealing. With so many thousands of poeple all making a few copies the amount of revenue being lost becomes very great. The proliferation of this negative past time has led to many smaller firms going to the wall and larger ones having to tighten their belts considerably. People can only damage the industry by home copying, rather like biting the hand that feeds you.

As regards pricing of tapes, I would say that most software is priced about right, a fair bit cheaper than for most other makes of micro. Lower prices may not mean less copying, but less copying does mean lower prices. It's up to the public to decide which direction they want the software industry to take.

Here comes the 'praise CRASH to high heavens' bit! What can I say? An excellent mag, exactly right in every respect. I susbscribe to two other top mags as well, but they aren't a patch on CRASH. The reviews seem fairly accurate; I pay more attention to the criticisms section than to the ratings as they give a better reflection of what the game actually 'feels' like. The letters pages are great, I especially like the occasional non- serious letters. The software house and programmer profiles are very interesting indeed. All in all 85p very well spent. Keep up the good work!

Paul Hutchinson, Upper Norwood, London SE19

No doubt the argument relating to piracy will go on and on. As to TV characters or situations appearing in computer games I'm not sure so far, of the planned ones I have seen Terrahawks by CRL, which I thought wasn't bad, and Dangermouse (In Double Trouble) which I thought looked good but played disappointingly. It will be interesting to see what the future holds in this respect. Thanks for the kind comments about CRASH.
LM

LEARNING

Dear Sir,
My children buy your magazine each month and go by your reviews when purchasing their games. As a parent I would like to see them put the computer to greater use by using it for their studies and wondered if you had considered reviewing some of the educational software for the 11/18 year old age group. It must be more interesting revising for O levels on the computer than reading through all their books. Please could you tell me if any software is made for revision of O level Cambridge papers in Maths, Physics and Biology for the Spectrum, as I wish to purchase them.

Mrs. S. A. Vogl, Benfleet, Essex

We have actually reviewed several educational programs in past issues of CRASH, although in the main these have been for younger children than the age group you mention. There is a series of O level programs by Calisto for the Spectrum, dealing with Maths and Biology among others. Calisto Software can be found at 119 John Bright Street, Birmingham B1 1BE. I hope that's of some use Mrs. Vogl.
LM

FOREIGN RIP OFF

Dear Lloyd,
While reading the August issueI was amused to read of the dissatisfaction expressed by many readers at the price of software and in particular *Sabre Wulf*.

Well this might come as a shock to you but the £9.95 that readers complained about is exactly what I paid for *Atic Atac*! My monthly CRASH costs me £1.41.

Why? You might well ask. Well it's because I live in the Republic of Ireland and as such I have to pay an extra 20p on each English pound. CRASH should be £1.02 and *Atic Atac* £6.60. So where does the extra 39p for CRASH and the massive £3.40 for any game go? Copies of the same game can vary by £3 in different shops. I've seen *The Hobbit* for £21.95 and *Hungry Horace* at £19.95!

Someone is ripping us off and I'd like to know who, whether disorganised retailers or the profit centred software houses. Are the software houses pushing up the prices in Europe as well? Do they think they can get away with it because it isn't England?

Well anyway, thanks for a great magazine, keep up the good work. Maybe some European readers have similar views?

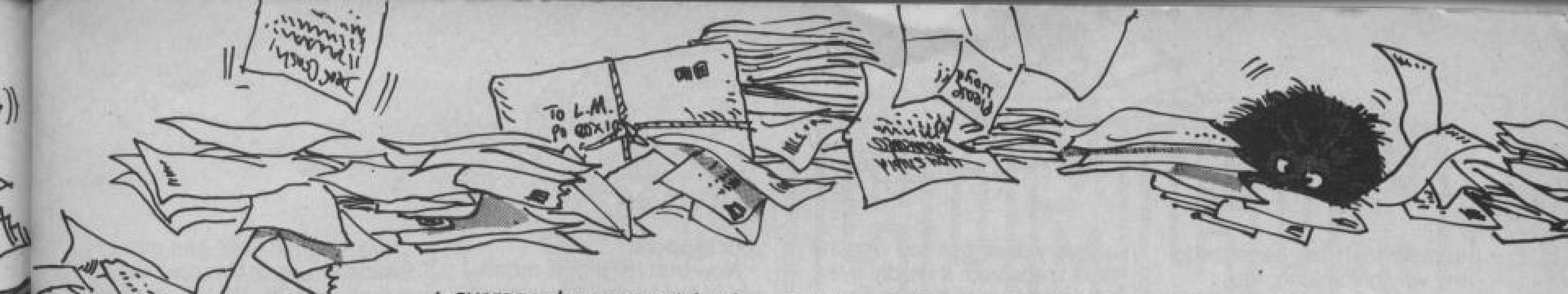
Mark Ellis, Athlone, Co Westmeath, Ireland.

Well I have no idea how the software houses do their business with Ireland or Europe, but I can assure you that we certainly don't see any more money from selling copies of CRASH abroad, in fact I think I'm right in saying that it actually costs us more to distribute abroad. So if anyone's making more cash out of it, it must be the wholesalers and retailers. Anyone know the answer?
LM

WHAT RIVER?

Dear CRASH, In reply to Tim Kerr's letter (issue 9), I don't long to see a 'completely glossy issue' of CRASH. I would rather have the presentation as it is than the flashy, easily-rippable style that the other so-called computer mags use.

Probably the only disadvantage of this presentation is the screen photos of each game. Take, for example, the FRONTLINE article (issue 9). One picture supposably shows a screen of a wargame with the caption,





'Only the river is recognisable. . .' What river?

Still there is only one mag which is decent enough and worth buying, and most of your readership will know the one I mean. . . Keep it up. I must also compliment Oliver Frey for his excellent coverwork which matches the contents in style and presentation.

A point I would like to mention is the comparison being made by Elite concerning their new game *Kokotoni Wilf* and *Jet Set Willy*. They just don't compare! Give me *Jet Set Willy* any day! I'm not saying that *Kokotoni Wilf* isn't a good game. because it is above the average churn em out, but I feel that graphics and screen presentation have been placed higher than the playability. It soon becomes irritating and a drag.

Finally I would like to say thank you to Steve Turner and Hewson Consultants for the most outstanding, exciting and playable game for the Spectrum yet - *The Legend of Avalon*. After reading the preview article in issue 8, it was a game that caught my imagination and so I bought it as soon as I could; and for the first time ever I was not disappointed in what I saw.

Forget *Atic Atac*, forget *Sabre Wulf*, forget *Jet Set Willy* - and get *Avalon*!!

By the way, does Johnny Tapper (issue 10) want to swap *Schizoids* for *Vampire Village* - a fair swap eh?

GADS, Royston, Barnsley, S. Yorks

I know what you mean about that wretched river! It's a constant problem, I'm told, to reproduce colour screens in black and white. According to the art department, the pale blue and green of the Spectrum pallette (there's a word for you!) appear to be the same tone in black and white, which means that definition can get very poor sometimes - a case in point with the picture you're talking about. Nevertheless, it was a rather dull looking one. Glad you enjoyed playing Legend *of Avalon, a lot of work has gone into the program.*

Software houses today are all worried, of course, that a really good game they produce will immediately be copied all over the place, but the next writer suggests that not all is as rosy for copiers as you might imagine.

LM

POOR COPIES

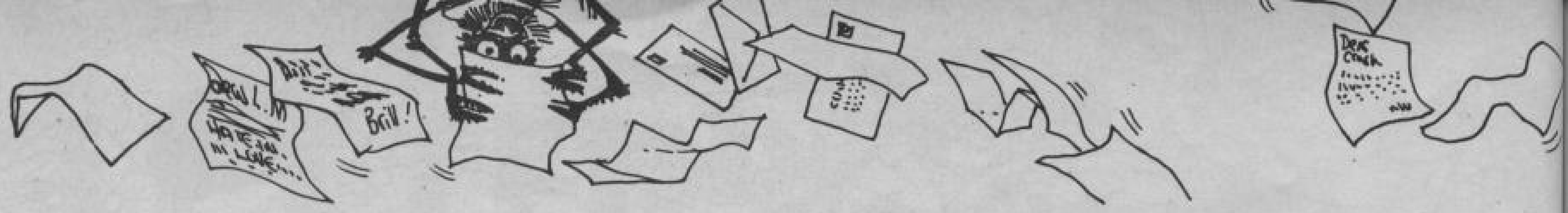
Dear Lloyd,
On reading the letter from Andrew J. Wray (October issue), he estimates that for every original game bought, around 15 copies are made.

Well I know four other Spectrum owners personally and they know many others through their schools, and I have borrowed some of their cassettes that they have copied from originals, and they were of such poor quality, with constant humming, distortion and very low recording level, that I would not get another copy from them.

I do not believe that very many people have got any idea about how to make a good, working copy as they probably use two ordinary mono cassette recorders, connected ear to mic, and it is here where the problems start.

The majority of these tape recorders have an auto-recording level, making the silent parts of the program hum, and the audio tones roughly half the volume that they need to be. So a copy from an original will work, but a copy from *that* copy is very unlikely to work.

Personally, I would rather have an original, not only for the instructions (it helps



sometimes!), but because to my way of thinking, the artwork on the cassette inlay is part of the atmosphere of the game itself.

I would guess that about four or five copies are made from an original on average, as there must be people who don't know many other Spectrum owners and so never make any copies; and on the other hand there are clubs who will make 20or 30 copies from one original, one for each of its members.

I have found the 'turbo loaders' much more difficult to copy than most and I suspect that more software houses will adopt this technique, because it seems to be the most effective way of cutting down tape piracy.

I hope people will realise that although software is expensive, you are really paying for the development of better programs in the future and you cannot keep on getting something for nothing. We really do have a massive choice of software titles to choose from, so it makes sense to buy one now and again.

Michael Austin, Dunstable, Beds.

Well of course, it isn't only copies which can be hard to load, although the standard of tape duplication is usually very high. But the 'turbo loaders' are definitely causing more problems because the majority of recorders people are using with their computers are very cheap (sensibly in most cases) which means that the 'window' has to be pretty wide. By 'window' I mean the upper and lower limits in which a signal is accepted. It is perfectly possible, for instance, to record a tape in such a way that only a tape recorder with very good heads, exactly aligned and with the azimuth correct, can receive the signal. Naturally software houses try to keep this 'window' very wide to allow for everyone's tape recorder. But the 'turbo loaders, do narrow the window down quite a bit.

The next writer has had a problem with an original...

LM

DISGUSTED

Dear CRASH,
I was one of the winners in July's edition of CRASH and I am very disappointed with the tape I received. It hardly ever loads and when it does it sometimes contains bugs. I have loaded it successfully a grand total of five times. When it loads I enjoy it very much, but I am disgusted that such a good magazine could send such a bad copy.

Nicky Wardman, Mark Abbott, Halton, Leeds

I am sorry you have had such a problem, but I should point out that we do not check all the tapes that are sent out, either as prizes or as mail order, otherwise we would have a staff of two hundred just doing that! Also, as you do not say what the tape or competition was, it might well be that we were not the ones to send the tape to you. If it came from another software house that was running a competition, they would have sent it to you.

Another point here is that if you have managed to load the tape a few times, then there wouldn't appear to be much wrong with it. Bugs can result from corrupted data due to a bad load. It is possible that the 'window' I was mentioning just above is a bit narrow on this one particular tape. Have you checked the alignment of your recorder's heads, and most importantly, do you clean them every week? I can't tellyou how important that is. A computer program is not like music, it doesn't just get mushy as the deposit builds up on the heads, either the prog will go through or it won't.

To prove to the sceptics that we don't just get 'grovel' letters, here's a particularly jolly piece from Northern Ireland.

LM

GET THE BEANO

What I, and I'm sure a lot of other readers want, is a FULL, IN-DEPTH 'inside Ultimate' report. How many members are there? Who are they? By the way, is it true that A. C. G. are owned by K. P. (you know, nuts and crisps) - both have the same address.

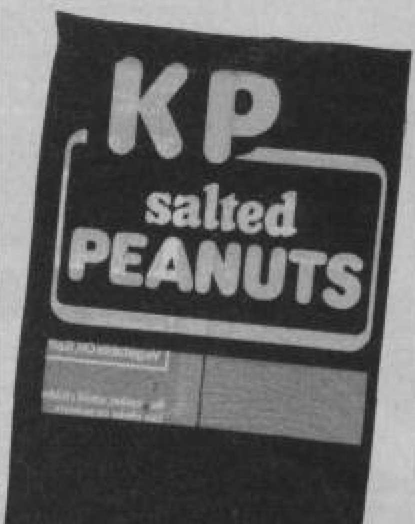
Whilst on the subject of Ultimate - who thought of that comic strip thing? It's silly, and even worse than that TERMITE MAN rubbish. Can't you see that they are out of place? If I wanted stuff like that I would buy the *Beano*. You insult the intelligence of your readers.

Now that I'm in this mood, I would like to say a few things about *JSW* and *Sabre Wulf*. They must be the two most over-rated games since Clive called 'Through the wall' exciting. That idiot Smith must think we're all as daft as he is. Firstly the sprites can only move in two directions, and secondly, the background for the rooms is all block characters, and thirdly, it's too easy to play (and to cheat), not to mention the bugs. Defend yourself, Smith, if you dare.

Sabre Wulf is bad in an odd way. The sound, graphics, presentation and idea are worth 100 in any review, but the GAME is a load of bull**** (speaking in stars is beginning to catch on, don't you think?). The inlay tells of WulfS - there is only one. It also mentions temples - where are they? (I have scored 99 - maximum - by cheating, and believe me, there are no temples). Replace the trees with walls and the animals with ghosts and you have *Atic Atac*. Let's hope that Ultimate - our only GOOD software house - have not become lazy.

You may have disagreed with my previous comments, but I think you must agree here. It is about time people began to take the playing tips page seriously and stop sending in tips which they have made up. I refer to the Lunar trailer and the raft in *JSW*, and also the letter which claims that *Lunar Jetman* ends at level 30 - this is not the case. Please print this bit as it is time people stopped abusing what is a very good idea - it spoils the whole playing tips page.

Jim McKeown, Coalisland, Co. Tyrone, N. Ireland



We seem to have had the Beano *argument before now in these pages. Well you can't please everyone all the time - there are obviously a lot of people who enjoy even termites and luny jetmen. I'm not going to argue the points about the games, since even letter writers are entitled to their opinions! But I do agree about the playing tips. There simply isn't time to sort everything out - we do check the POKEs but always at a later date.*

LM

USER-FRIENDLY

Dear Lloyd,
I am writing to you not on the subject of user-friendly computers, no, not even user-friendly programs. I am writing about user-friendly software houses.

Until now all software houses (except maybe Virgin) have been, in a way, hiding behind a screen and churning out games. It is as if they are people on a higher plane and are too good to be seen by the general public. Don't they want to be seen? Some people may want to see the author of, say, *Braxx Bluff* in front of his screen. Take







DK'Tronics for example; can you honestly say that they have used any real humour at all? I have never seen a letter from, or a picture of - one of their programmers. Have you?

But now there is Design Design. They have come out of their crystal shell (joke?!) Their sarcasm, witty remarks and jokes in and out of their programs have had an awesome effect. You actually feel as if you could insult one of them and they would laugh. Look at the result of it all! Practically everyone I know, knows Design Design's members and their games off by heart. In fact, you could almost say that the Design Design team are human!

Other software houses take note. This is the age of the user-friendly software house.

As for Design Design I have two comments; 1) keep it up; 2) if Simon Bwatell and Gwaham Stafford don't send me the passwords for *Spectacle* within seven days, I will never buy one of their games again. . . Oh all right, I will be buying them all, but they'd still better send me those passwords! Please? Pwetty Please? Just one of them?

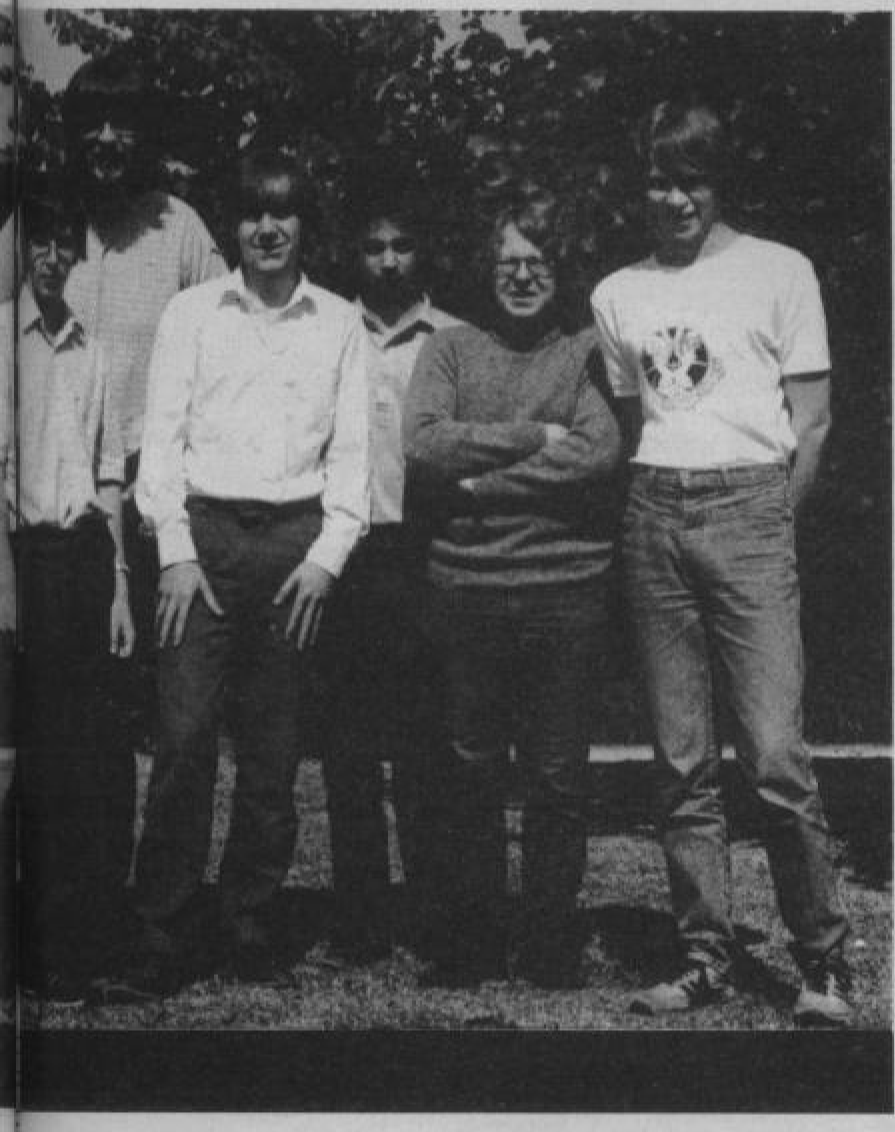
Iain. C. Lowe(13), Wakefield, W. Yorks

I think it's true that programmers should be seen more by the people who buy their games, but quite often the software houses prefer to keep them in the background, so that the software house is the image and not the individuals who write the programs. I do think this is short-sighted. After all book publishers have their own image, but they sell books off the backs of an author's name.

Design Design do sort of look human, don't they? 's amazing what computers can do these days. Joe Maragh from Clifton, Nottingham, would also like the passwords c'mon, humans!

LM

User-friendly humans?





FROM DOWN UNDER



Dear CRASH,
I feel moved to write to you following some of the comments in past issues of CRASH regarding copying/pirating.

In your issue 6, page 34, under the heading GO NORD, you mention something about, 'Australians, as everyone knows, don't have to buy software - they just seem to rip it off. ' Could you please enlarge on that and/or give some reasons for your scathing comments!?

Here in Australia, English software costs roughly 2.4 times the amount you pay in England, for example *The Hobbit* costs —40, Ultimate games cost —25. Even taking into account differences in wages and salaries, the difference is rather large. In my own case I have a daughter (9 years) who uses the Spectrum, microdrive etc. , on her own. Now, as you surely know, cassette recorders are notoriously prone to chew or glitch tape, even with the most careful loading! So I make audio back up copies of all the software I have bought. Imagine the chagrin felt by us when our tape deck chewed up a copy of *Jet Set Willy*!! So - a new back up copy was made and no harm was done. If, in future, software houses were to 'protect' their programs against copying, I for one would be most reluctant to purchase their games, I just cannot afford misshaps to put me into the position of having to replace what is invariably a favourite program of ours.

I would not copy a game for resale, giving away or just for the sake of doing it, only to protect my considerable investment.

Mr. Rapp, Moorabbin, Australia

The remark about Australians ripping off software was not actually aimed at the end user, who, as you have just shown, has to pay quite high prices for imported material. The reference came at a time when a number of British software houses were concerned about the amount of material that was being effectively pirated by Australian 'companies' for sale because they felt it was 'all too far away' to be worried by legal action being taken.

Your remarks regarding back up copies seem, to me, to be well justified in the light of the price of software in Australia.

LM

BAD REPUTATION

Dear Lloyd,
I think that some of the reviews that CRASH gives, tend to make games program companies get a bad reputation. For instance, if I went to a computer shop and noticed a 'Pole Position' type game (YAHOO!), but it was made by . . . . . , (the same company that made a different game which got a bad review in CRASH) it would persudae me not to buy it. CRASH is great!

Harry McNaughton, Eastcote, Pinner, Middlesex

I suppose that could be a bit of a problem, but then, that's why we review games in the first place, to let you know what we think of them, regardless of who made them. As a matter of fact, Micromega started off with some very ordinary games, which most people may have forgotten all about by now, and yet they have since been one of the most successful of software houses with excellent games.

LM

THE BORROWER

Dear CRASH,
I am writing to tell you that the method for finding 'Drapnir' in the October issue does not work, and the POKE for *Hunchback* unlimited lives, doesn't work either. Still, I would like to thank you for a great mag. I buy it every



month. My friend says that CRASH is rubbish, but the same day I buy it he is down to my house asking me if he can borrow it 'for a few days', and then I never see it again.

Stuart Maskill, Sprotbrough, Doncaster, S. Yorks.

CRASH has quite a few uses. Try rolling it up rather tightly and then hitting him over the head with it - well, perhaps not.

LM





HE'S HERE! HE'S MADE IT!

Son of Blagger for 48K Spectrum

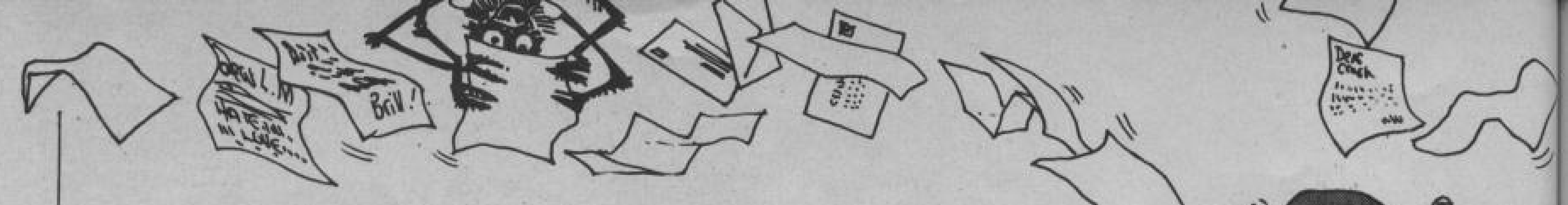
Relive the daring exploits of Roger the Dodger through his prodigy Slippery Sid. More skill, more nerve, this cool little character seeks not only to follow in his famous parent's footsteps, but to establish some amazing feats of his own. Money's not his game. Espionage is his middle name and having forced his way into the National Security HQ he's faced with a no return journey through one of the most dangerous, most complex buildings in the land. Can he successfully complete a nerve tingling search for the golden keys – his only means of escape – or this time has his skill and daring taken him too far. Watch out for those weird killer security guards – you never know what chilling surprises the mad scientists have produced – and beware the floor doesn't disappear from under your feet, sending you to an early grave.

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ELEMENTARY, MY DEAR BUG

Dear Lloyd & Derek B,
A very amusing thing happened whilst I was playing *Sherlock* recently.

I was standing at the Jones Front Gate when I came across a policeman, who had just been attacked by Major Ffoulkes (I later discovered). On screen came the report, YOU CAN SEE AN UNCONSCIOUS POLICEMAN. AN UNCONSCIOUS POLICEMAN SAYS I'M SORRY, SIR, I HAVE MY ORDERS, BUT NO ONE CAN IS TO GET BY. !

Speaking of bugs, the game doesn't understand many of the words the booklet says it does - why? Away from the bugs though, I think the game's great fun. Remember in his review, Derek asked us to try to dodge the taxi fare. I did and got called a 'bloody snob'!

Patrick Cannon, Bury, Greater Manchester

It's the way they train the policemen these days, even unconscious ones like to have the last word!

On a totally different subject, **S. Jarman from 92 Maesydail, Newtown, Powys** *is desperate for an issue 1 of CRASH, and asks if anyone will part with a copy. He says he's prepared to pay any price for it. So much for the Lloyd Mangram swap shop/*classified section. On with the letters.

THE SHOPKEEPERS SIDE

Dear Sir,
(With reference to editorial remarks about the attitudes of retailers to selling software) I give discount on **every**game I sell, eg: £1 off *Lords of Midnight*. I take orders and reserve games until pocket money day. I keep all the back issues of CRASH and PC Games and allow customers access to them. I hold a free raffle every month for £5 voucher off any game. I give away surplus posters and literature.

Why?

I am the mother of three children so I really do understand how much £6/£7 is to a child, and I talk to most of my young customers before they buy a game. I want and need regular, satisfied customers.

BUT

I have had stolen a *Hobbit* book, an expensive interface, inlay cards and boxes for games such as *Fighter Pilot*etc. , price swapping on boxes, been left with orders uncollected, had boxes returned with blank tapes inside - presuming I would not check and would refund money. I have had stories about 'my mum/dad/sister bought the same game' or 'I didn't know it needed a joystick' - this after three weeks - and so on, and on. . .



Think hard about your treatement of shopkeepers or you may find that those of us who try to help will be the ones you lose.

Elizabeth P. CLark of James McKenzie Clark, (Electrical and Domestic Appliance Repairs), Dunfermline

The above letter was passed onto me by the editor, who has already written a personal reply to it. The reference in question is to the editorial of issue 8 (September).
LM

THE SOFTWARE SHARE

Dear Mr. Mangram,
As I work for a software house (Elite Systems) I was most interested in the two letters by Mr. C. Jones and Andrew Wray that were published in your October issue concerning software piracy. I must say that I agree with Andrew on the point that home copying is relatively harmless and can't be stopped. And I would like to add that if a home user can break into a program to copy it, then the programmer hasn't done his job of protecting his product, and therefore should not complain about such pirating.

However, I would like to clarify an argument on which there has been such a lot of discussion just lately. That is the argument on the price of software and how piracy is related to it. My argument on this goes as follows;

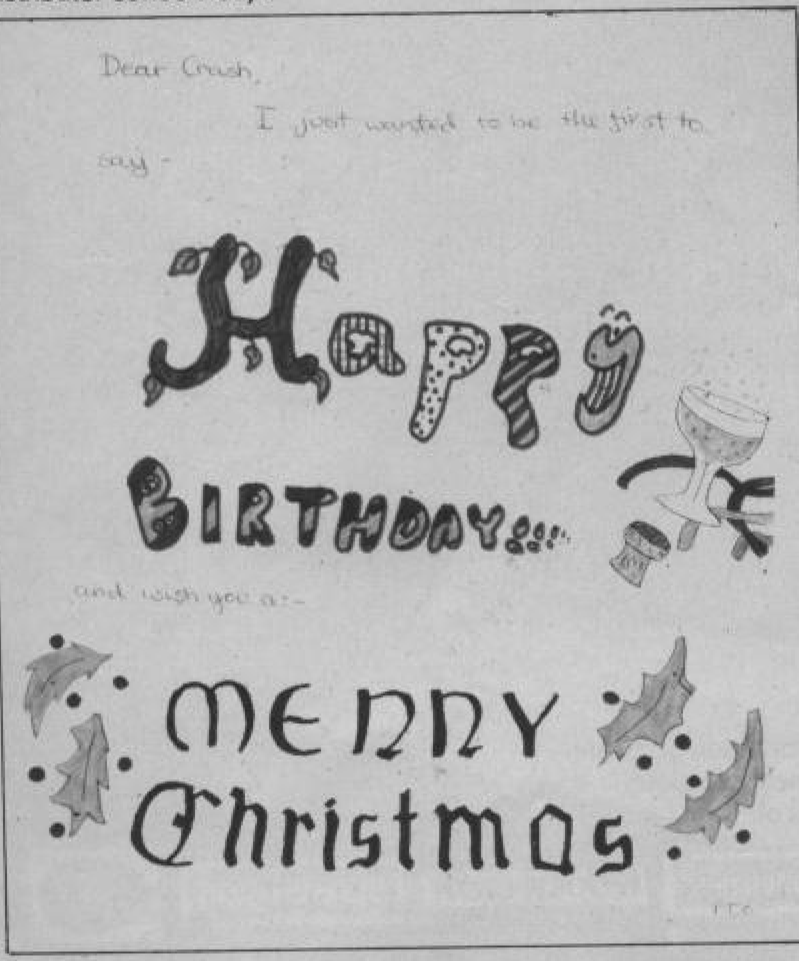
If the price of software was to be dropped, then the quality would suffer and so would the customer. This would be due to a decrease in the number of software houses and the competetiveness of the market. To help explain this, here is how the money received is distributed. Distributors - approx 50; Software House - approx 45; Programmer - approx 5 (all these figures vary according to the software house and distributor concerned).

Out of that 45 the software house gets has to come lighting, heating and renting of office space as well as other overheads. Advertising of just a single program can take anything up to £15, 000. So you can see that the estimates that people tend to make on how much software houses earn are, in the most part, grossly exaggerated.

I would also like to pick up on another point that Andrew made in his letter, and that was that if the pirating of Spectrum software is so serious, how come Spectrum games take nine out of the top ten places in the charts? I would suggest that this is simply because there has been a far greater proportion of Spectrums sold than any other computer. I will read your magazine with interest to see what views people have on this subject **Stephen Lockley, Short Heath, Willenhall**

Stephen's comments follow on quite well from last month's outburst on the same theme from the Software Projects programmer.

To wrap up with this month, thank you to **Robert Corradi from Brookmans Park, Herts**, *who sent us this Birthday and Christmas card - the first of the season. . .*



Travel with...

Trashman

Now Trashman is a great British success he's ready for international stardom – and you can help him on his way around the world. Our hero has the tall order task of cleaning up every major litter spot around the globe. Scooping up flowers thrown into the bull ring by matador fans in Spain, collecting the tissues of the faithful as they sob by Jerusalem's Wailing Wall, picking up coconuts from a palm beach in Samoa and collecting the empties at the German beer festival (Trashman still likes his tipple!) are just some of the challenges that make up Trashman's task.

Of course, your skill can help our hilarious hero to complete the necessary litter collection at every location, so he can earn the money to fly on to the next country in his round the world quest. And as he visits every continent on Earth in search of rubbish you can share every fun filled, thrill packed second with him.

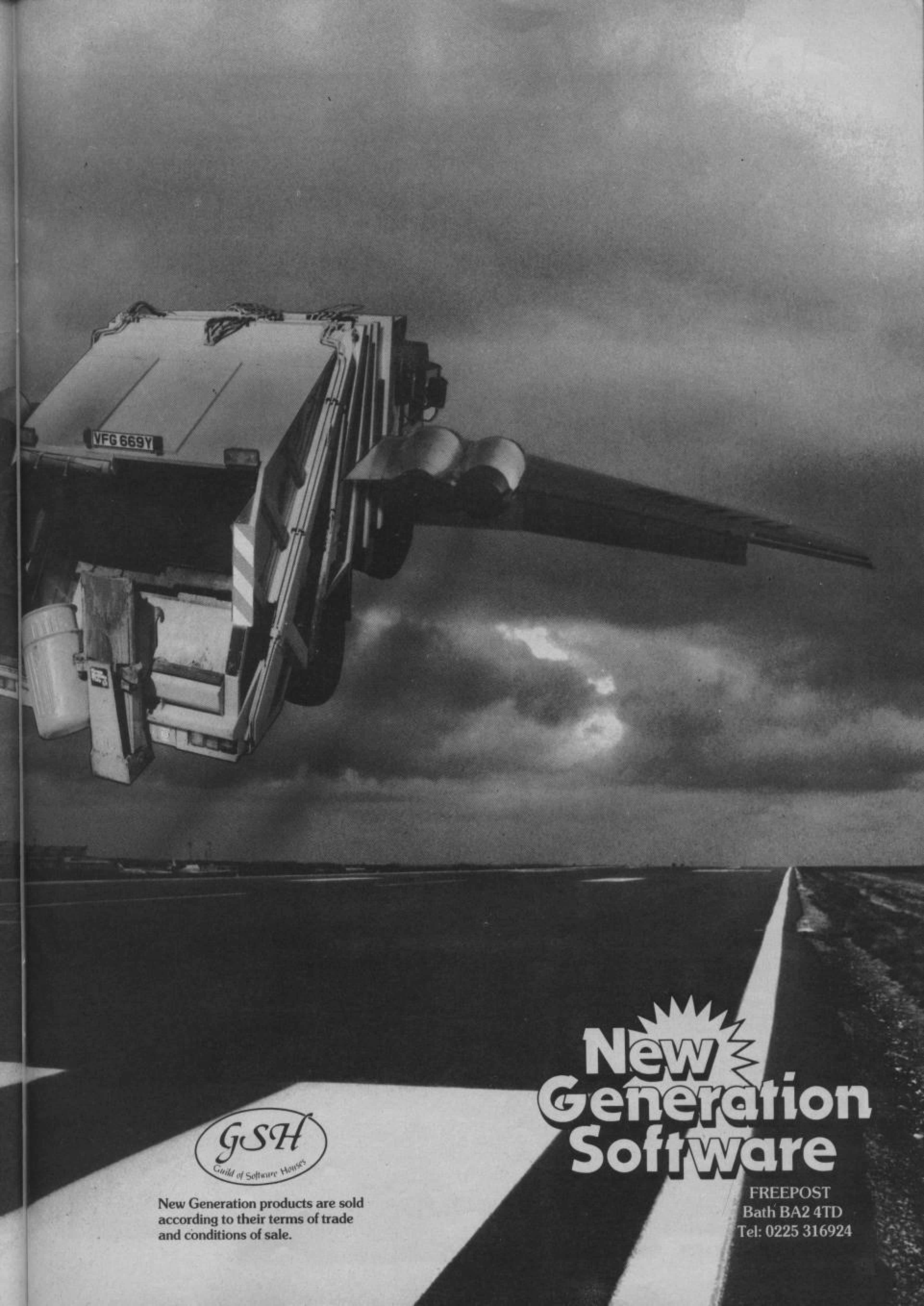
Travel with Trashman has one or two player scoring, Hall of Fame and is compatible with Kempston, Sinclair Interface 2, Protek or equivalent joysticks. Available for the 48K Spectrum today from most good computer stores for just **£5.95.**

TRAVEL WITH TRASHMAN. AUTHOR – MALCOLM EVANS

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KERRASH! N·E·W·S



A close up of the keyboard - as you can see, some things have moved about. . .

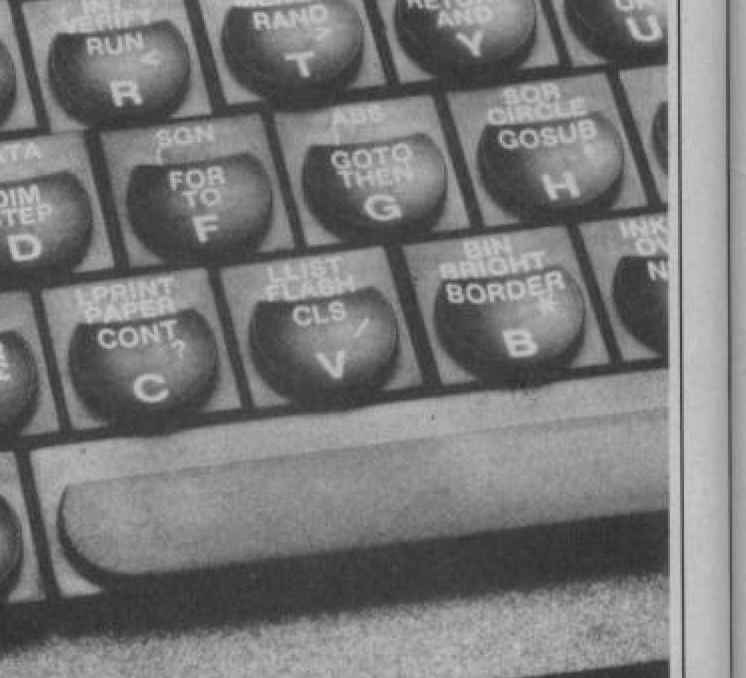
SPECTRUM PLUS

On October 15th. Sinclair Research released information about its new computer, The ZX Spectrum. Essentially the same as the existing Spectrum, the new 48K model has been placed inside a truncated QL body and therefore offers a full professional keyboard. The Spectrum is fully compatible with existing Spectrum software and peripherals (although manufacturers of add- on keyboads may be less than enthusiastic about this).

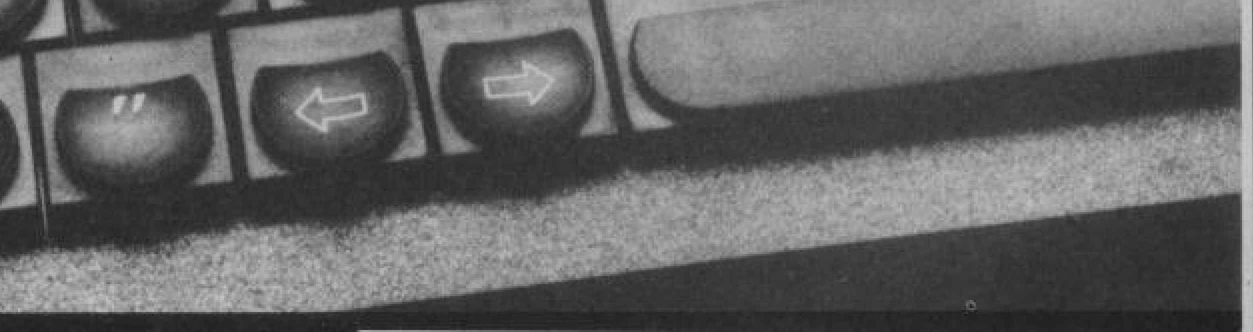
The hard plastic keys include a space bar and 17 keys in addition to those available on the existing model. These enable many functions to be performed with a single key stroke. The keyboard may also be tilted, using retractable feet built into the underside of the case. There is also a reset button to clear the computer without that irritating plug pulling we're all so familiar with.

The Spectrum retails at £179.95 and includes six applications program worth over £50 - these are *Scrabble, Make a Chip, Chequered Flag, Chess, VU-3D* and *Tasword 2.*

The new computer is said to be already on sale at some branches of WH Smith and Dixons.



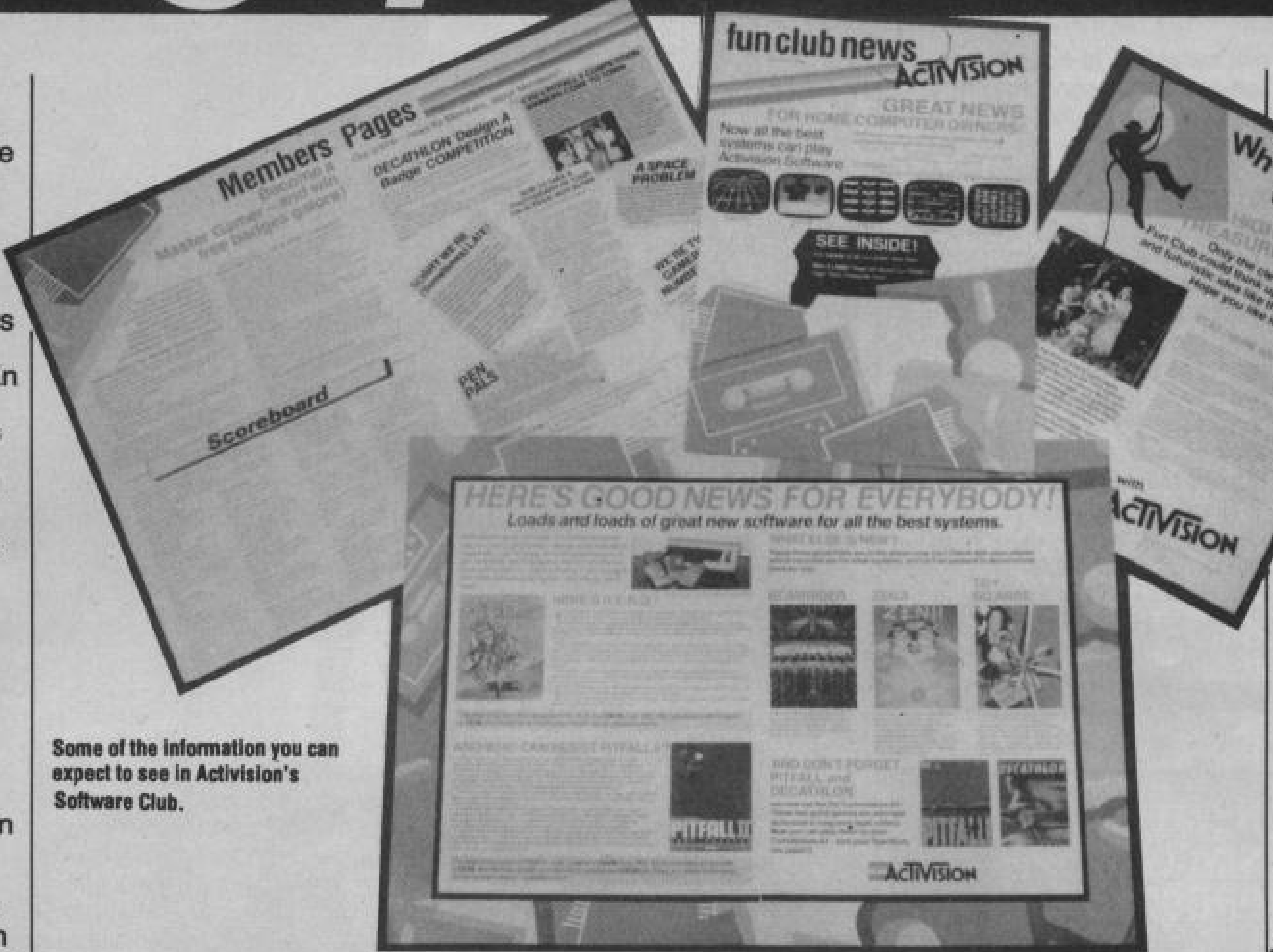
The new 48K Sinclair ZX Spectrum features a fully professional typewriter-action keyboard.



ACTIVISION CLUB

Membership clubs of software houses appear to be all the rage lately, and one of the latest is that of **Activision**. When you join the Activision Software Club you go on the mailing list for their Club News a full colour quarterly publication which gives you an update on all forthcoming Activision releases as well as tips and views from other members. Activision say that they run large-scale competitions for members as well as a worldwide pen-pal service for those who would like to communicate with home computer buffs from other countries.

On top of all this the Activision Software Club offers a Performance Award Scheme, which gives everyone who owns Activision software a chance to win performance prizes, badges or certificates by sending in a photograph of their on-screen hi- score. Perpetual hi-scorers



Some of the information you can expect to see in Activision's Software Club.

are awarded 'hi-score' tee-shirts and real champs may receive a 'Champ' sweatshirt.

Activision's Software Club has been going now for over two years and Activision claim many thousands of members from several countries and over a number of computers. It is hoped that owners with systems for which they have recently started to manufacture software will join their club and swell the numbers further.

For details ring Kathy Leonard or Lorraine Vick on 0628 75171 or write to Activision Software Club, 5/7 Forlease Road, Maidenhead, Berks SL6 1RP.

NEW LOOK FOR SINCLAIR PROGRAMS

Sinclair Programs, the listings magazine recently taken over by EMAP Business and Computer Publications (publishers of *Computer & Video Games*) has announced a complete revamp. After a short statement aimed to prove how popular the title has been, the announcement goes on to say how it's all going to be changed to make it visually and editorially more exciting - even a new logo will be used on the cover. Contents will include programming tips, 'in depth' software reviews, adventure reviews, a problems page, news, competitions and 'lots more'. What happend to all those listings that made it 'popular' in the first place?. . .

THE LAST WORD

Using an appropriate Greek pun, the last word in software is claimed to be **Omega Software**. Omega is the umbrella name for a group of well known software houses, one of which prefers to remain anonymous, which includes **Anirog**, CRL and **Silversoft**. The aim of Omega is to put out budget software at £1.99, many games of which would have been released in earlier times at far higher prices. For the Spectrum, these include *Copter, Handy Andy, Chamber of Horrors, Pool* and *Corruption.*



Nigel Searle (right) presents the Cambridge Award Trophy and £2000 cheque to John Sherry for his winning game, The Prince.

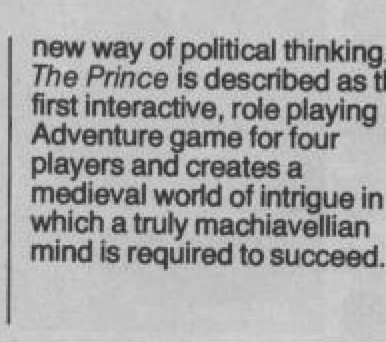
CAMBRIDGE AWARDS

Nigel Searle, the Managing Director of Sinclair Research, presented the prizes to the winners and runners-up of the 1984 Cambridge Awards at London's Ritz Hotel on October 4th. He praised the role of the software houses in the development of the home computer industry when he presented the £2000 cheque and trophy to **John Sherry** of Keele, Staffs, this year's winner. John's game, called *The Prince*, was developed from Machiavelli's book of the same name. Machiavelli was the Italian Renasissance politician whose devious tactics gave rise to a whole new way of political thinking. *The Prince* is described as the first interactive, role playing Adventure game for four players and creates a medieval world of intrigue in which a truly machiavellian mind is required to succeed.

LIGHTNING

Oasis Software whose graphics designing utility *White Lightning* has proved so popular, has released the program on Microdrive. Essentially the same version as the original cassette version, the source can be compiled from microdrive, freeing much more space for sprite storage and making a more rapid development cycle possible. Anyone with the cassette version who would like to upgrade may return their cassette to Oasis and a cheque for £5 to: Oasis Software, 9a Alexandra Parade, Weston-super-Mare, Avon BS23 1QT.

There are also two official White Lightning User Groups which offer help, advice and exchange information via newsletters. Their addresses are: Mr. T. Kelly, The Model Shop (Belfast) Ltd. , 10-16 Queen Street, Belfast; and Mr. M. Richards, South West White Lightning User Group, 8 Victoria Road, Roche, Cornwall.





THE SANDMAN

Star Dreams have announced a forthcoming adventure release which they claim is the most bizzare and fascinating adventure program ever produced. Entitled *The Sandman Cometh*, it breaks away entirely from the traditional subjects of adventure games. Say Star Dreams, 'There has long been a feeling in the software press that adventure games have tended to be very repetetive in their choice of material. *The Sandman Cometh* is a major departure in the kind of thinking behind games writing. The adventure represents a series of dream sequences, each with its own set of logical problems in an otherwise illogical scenario.'

The program was devised and created by the person who wrote the new Stranglers pop group's adventure *Aural Quest*. It contains over one hundred locations each with its own fast drawing picture which remains on screen during play. The game is packaged as a parody of a motion picture, coming in a video style case, complete with a comprehensive illustrated booklet. This theme is carried on into the program with film style credits and opening; even the loading screen being a tongue in cheek representation of the Board of Censors' authorisation certificate.

The Sandman Cometh retails at £10.95 and is available now.

MEGA-MOVES

Imagine's games and name (The Name of The Game?) have been booted about a bit recently with news that Sinclair Research have optioned the 'mega' game *Bandersnatch* to be released on the QL sometime in Spring. Royalties from the sale of the game will go straight to the liquidator of Imagine Ltd. to help pay back some of the astronomical debts incurred by the company before it went broke.

On top of that, Ocean Software Ltd. has purchased a major portion of Imagine's assets including the name, logo and trading style. Some completed programs and software development ewuipment are also incorporated in the deal.

David Ward of Ocean says that they now have the sole rights to the Imagine name and are considering a re-launch of the label. All of

which seems to leave Beau Jolly, who had originally invested money in Imagine to purchase the marketing rights to existing titles as well as options (they thought) on the megagames, rather out in the cold.

Ocean have re-employed eight of the ex-Imagine programming team on a contract basis. They are working in Liverpool on the development of a number of program concepts including a new animated strategy adventure, due for release by Ocean at the end of November. This comes at a time when Ocean's best known Spectrum programmer, **Christian Urquhart**, has left the company.



NEW BOARD GAME

The first in a series of unique computer assisted board games was launched at **Websters Software's** Christmas Product Presentation, held at their head-quarters in Guildford on October 19th.

The new game, entitled *ATRAM (Advanced Tactical Reconnaissance and Attack Mission)* heralds a breakthrough in the computer games market, say Websters.

Its creator, **Miles Bozeat** of P. D. Visual Marketing says that he believes his product fills the gap between established family board games and computer adventure games. 'The players' skill determines the outcome, as they simultaneously plan the attack on their opponents' forces. The operations are carried out

A 'Cribbage' style board was used to record weapon, fuel and deployment status of the aircraft in play. But when the Spectrum appeared, the penny dropped, and the family computer was enrolled. In early 1984 Tony Morris, a computer expert, and Chris Barrell, a marketing professional, were recruited to develop the concept fully. The result is *ATRAM* for the 48K Spectrum and which retails at £19.95 and includes the board, all the playing pieces and the database cassette. on the board, while the computer acts as a database helping to assess and plan tactical manoeuvres. '

ATRAM has taken a long while to appear in its finished form, having been first conceived before the advent of home computers. 'Over several years, ' says Miles, 'the game was brought out and played with enthusiasm amongst family and friends, all the time refining and developing the most important balance so as not to allow any unfair advantage to either side. '

AN ALTERNATIVE TO WAR?

Just too late to be fully reviewed in this issue, comes a new game from **Arcade Software**, which is described as an alternative to the Third World War. Instead of fighting global war, the protagonists gather on a special sports field built on the moon. This is the *Therbo* field, from which the game takes its name. *Therbo* (thermal ballistic object) is the equivalent to a football or cricket ball, and is the object with which the two opposing sides play, trying to gain control of it to score goals.

The player is up against the computer, each taking a 'home run' at goal along what might best be described as an electron accelerator. Missiles, fuel collection and trying to knock the opponent's therbo off course, while he tries to knock it back on course, all play a part in this unusual game. Full review next month.



NEW STUDIO

Melbourne House are to create a new software studio in the UK, to be called **Studio B.** Two full time programmers have been employed by Melbourne House for the new studio. Their brief, says **Paula Byrne**, Publicity Manager for Melbourne House, is to develop high quality, innovative software, in keeping with the standards expected by people who buy Melbourne House games and utilities. The number of programmers employed by Studio B is expected to increase to at least nine by June.



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You've got to be quick to dive into the alcoves

SIR LANCELOT

Producer:
Memory required: **16K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Cargill**

Here's the first game from Melbourne House's new 'Studio B' based in England. Your task in this manic platform-ish game is to investigate 24 rooms in the castle and to collect all the things of use to you as you go. This is obviously the kind of useless existence that King Arthur's knights of the Round Table enjoyed, seeking, collecting and getting killed off.

Although principally a platform style game, *Sir Lancelot*has many variations on the different screens, ladders, stairs, towers, hidey-holes and all sorts of things. Because of the combination and placing of collectible objects and hazards, strategy becomes an important element in the game. Even when all the objects have been collected, you cannot clear a screen until you reach the flashing exit which appears when the last object is taken. There is a large playing area, with score lines and animated 'lives' remaining running along beneath.

CRITICISM

● 'After watching someone else play this game I was determined to do better than that person - that just goes to show the competetiveness of this game. Sir Lancelot is a well animated knight that has some amazing powers of jumping and running around the screen. Collecting the jewels can be an easy task or a difficult task depending on the screen layout and on the moving hazards, but as a general rule it gets progressively more difficult and more thought needs to be put in to each screen and reactions need to get sharper. Colours have been used very well to give various shades, all very pleasing to the eye and very clear. Graphics are of a nice size, and are also very detailed. One thing I especially like are your spare lives hanging about at the bottom of the screen waiting to be used, pacing impatiently from side to side in boredom. I found *Sir Lancelot*incredibly addictive, and just the sheer fact of wanting to see the next screen made me play the game even more. I can well recommend this game to anyone.'

● *'This is the best 16K game I have seen in a long time. It has all the graphics and playability of* Manic Miner *and four more screens as well! The knight you play moves around well and very fast, as do the other characters. You have to time jumps and work out a routine through each screen. I have one main criticism, and that is that you are given a very short time to finish the screen, but apart from that I enjoyed playing* Sir Lancelot *very much.'*

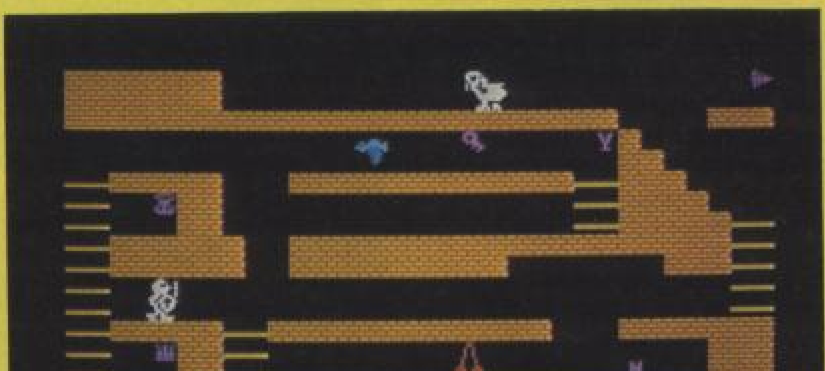
● '*Sir Lancelot* is rather a surprise from Melbourne House, who seem to have been more interested in 'state of the art' games in a way, for this isn't really that at all. What it is, is a very fast, cleverly torturous *Manic Miner* style game with neat, smooth, detailed graphics and some interesting variations on the theme of avoiding nasties. There's plenty here to play with 24 screens, each more a test than the last, and like *MM*, once you get good with the rhythm of a screen, you can show off to your friends. Very addictive, very playable, very good.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: alternate keys on second row for left and right and SHIFT to SPACE for jump
Joystick: cursor type, but hardly needs one
Keyboard play: very responsive, nice simple keys
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent
Sound: very good
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 4
Screens: 24
Special features:
General rating: an addictive, playable game, good to excellent value.

Use of computer	90%
Graphics	89%
Playability	88%
Getting started	93%
Addictive qualities	89%
Value for money	90%
Overall	**90%**

Another screen which looks deceptively simple



CHINESE JUGGLER

Producer: **Ocean**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.90**
Language: **Machine code**
Author:

Chinese Juggler is one of those games that has been translated from the original Commodore version, and done very well. As a game its success lies in the manic panic it inspires as you try to keep all the plates spinning at once - or is this getting ahead too fast?

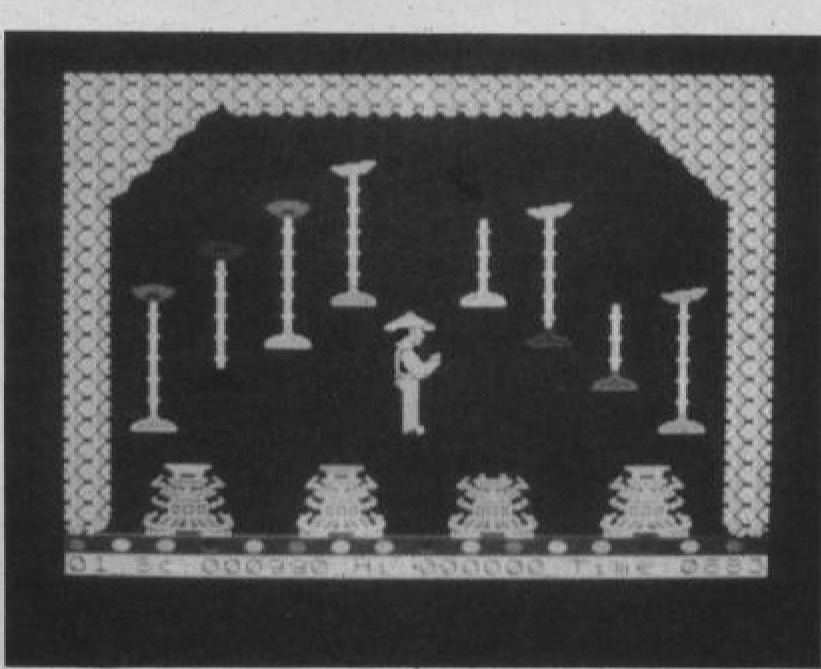
The object of the juggler is to set eight plates spinning on top of eight poles and keep them spinning. This isn't so very easy as each plate has to be set in motion one at a time, so by the time you have got five or six going, you are too busy keeping up the spin pace of the first ones to have time to get the remaining plates up and going.

The screen shows the juggler's stage and the eight poles waiting. At the front of the stage are four small chinese pagodas on which the coloured plates appear. The juggler can be directed around the playing area to collect a plate and then back to a pole to set the plate spinning. Returning to the same pole and using the activate button will cause the slowing plate to speed up again. Of course, if you don't get to a slowing plate in time, it will eventually fall off.

On the first screen all you have to do is get all eight poles filled with plates of any colour. But on subsequent screens there are further complications, such as setting a plate of specific colour spinning, the colour determined by the border colour. If no plate of the required colour is available, then you must throw the plate in the air and catch it again. This will alter the plate's colour - though it might not be the right one.

CRITICISM

● 'At first glimpse I expected this game to be a ten minute gimmick. To say the least, I was wrong. *Chinese Juggler* is fun and addictive, also requiring strategy to keep the plates spinning. After a while the frustration, music and the Chinese shuffle send you into a hypnotic state of addiction (meant in the nicest possible way)! Very good indeed, but not quite mega-league.'



Lets twist again like we did last summer

● *'First of all this was out for the Commodore 64 with its tremendous sound, and I was eager to see the Spectrum version. The Spectrum version seemed to be an exact copy, even down to the same tunes - but saying this the game wasn't even half the fun to play I think sound must have been a major feature of its 'parent'. It just seems to lack the manic drive of the original. Colour has been used well and the graphics are very good, and despite what I have said about the sound, it must be said that they have done very well considering the Spectrum's limitations. Overall a very playable game but one that will probably lack the addictive qualities of a good selling game.'*

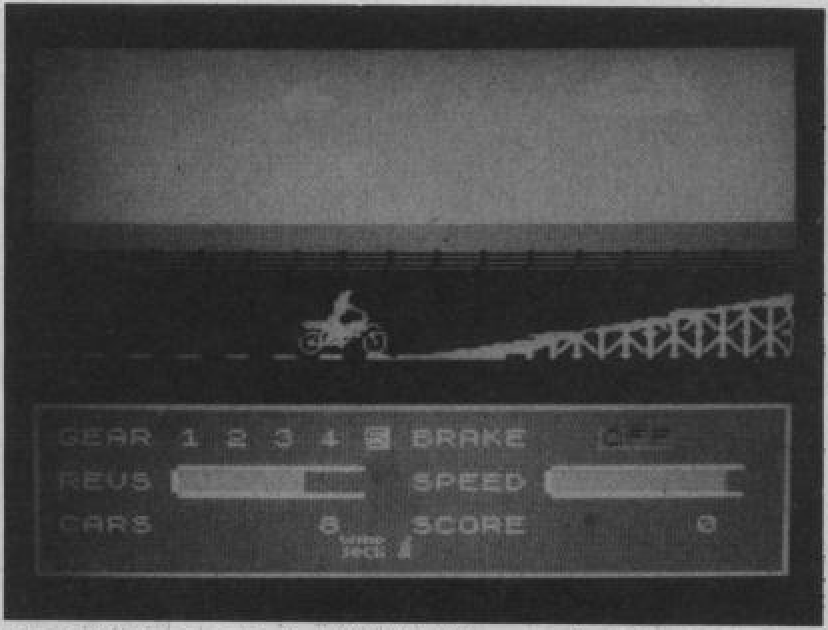


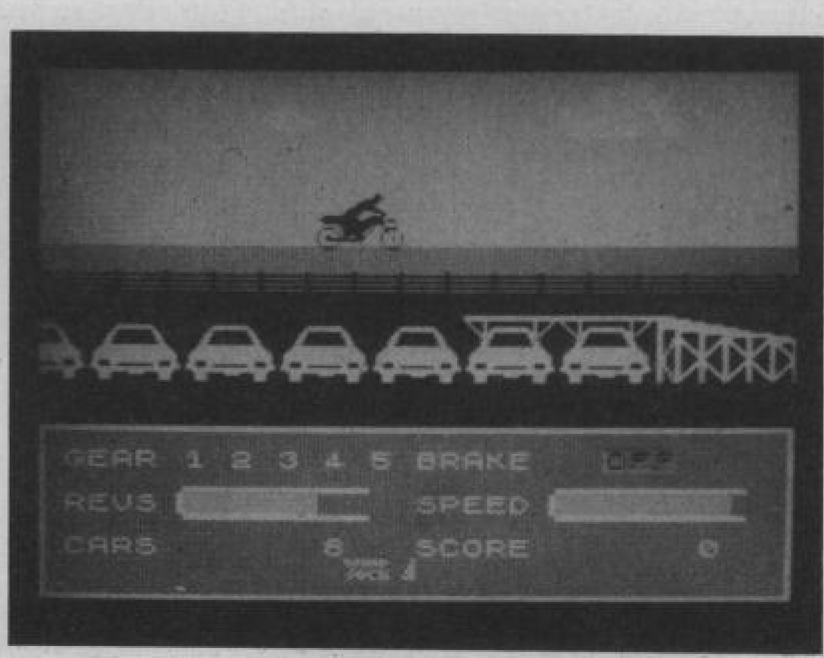
● '*Chinese Juggler* is less a game and more of a party piece. Its furious pace, helped by the incessant, crazy music, is just the sort of thing for several people to get into hysterics over. Whether it has the appeal overall to last as a single player game, I'm not so sure. It's highly original, amusing and playable but perhaps that's not quite enough to make it a monster hit.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: B - SPACE for actions on the plate, Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, D/E dis/enable music
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: responsive, sensible positions
Use of colour: good
Graphics: very good, nice animation especially on plates
Sound: excellent tune
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 1
Screens: 10
General rating: an original game which should appeal widely.

Use of computer	74%
Graphics	79%
Playability	84%
Getting started	73%
Addictive qualities	79%
Value for money	82%
Overall	**79%**





Is it a bird? Is it a 'plane? No, it's Eddie Kidd eight cars up and twenty feet in the air in JUMP CHALLENGE.

Eddie Kidd Jump Challenge

Producer: **Software Communications**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author:

Eddie Kidd is probably among the best known motor cycle stuntmen in the world. Apparently a film about American stuntman Evel Knievel inspired the twelve year old Kidd to start training with an ordinary bicycle - jumping over oil cans, barrels and even his school mates. Now Spectrum owners have an opportunity to match some of his feats in a simulation which has been programmed with some help from Eddie Kidd himself, who appeared on the Martech stand at the recent PCW Show in London to help promote the game.

Like the young Eddie, players will have to start off on a pedal bicycle before progressing to something a bit more powerful. The screen layout is quite straightforward. The top half is the actual playing area and the bottom half contains the instrumentation. In the playing area you are shown the blue sky with clouds (moving in parallax 3D), with a strip of yellow ground, a fence and then the black road with its white centre line stripes. Each attempt starts with the bike rolling off the take off ramp, heading away for the run up.

Your instrumentation shows the gears (1 to 5), brake on or off, two bars for revs and speed, and below that the objects and numbers you are attempting to jump. Controls from keyboard or joystick affect the speed, and therefore the gear change, by the throttle or brake, as well as turning the bike around and the angle at which Eddie leans. This latter is quite important both on take off and landing in controlling the attitude of the bike. Obviously other factors in a successful jump are the take off speed and the length of run up to the ramp. The run up is decided by the player quite simply by turning the bike around when you think you are far enough from the ramp. The wild card factor is the gusting headwind, which, depending on strength, can radically alter the length of the jump. To help you assess this factor, there is a wind sock device in the instrumentation area.

Software Communications are running two competitions in conjunction with *Eddie Kidd Jump Challenge*. Prizes include BMX Bikes, microcomputers and colour TVs. Details are on the inlay, which also includes your Official Contender Card and a Jump Challenge sticker.

CRITICISM

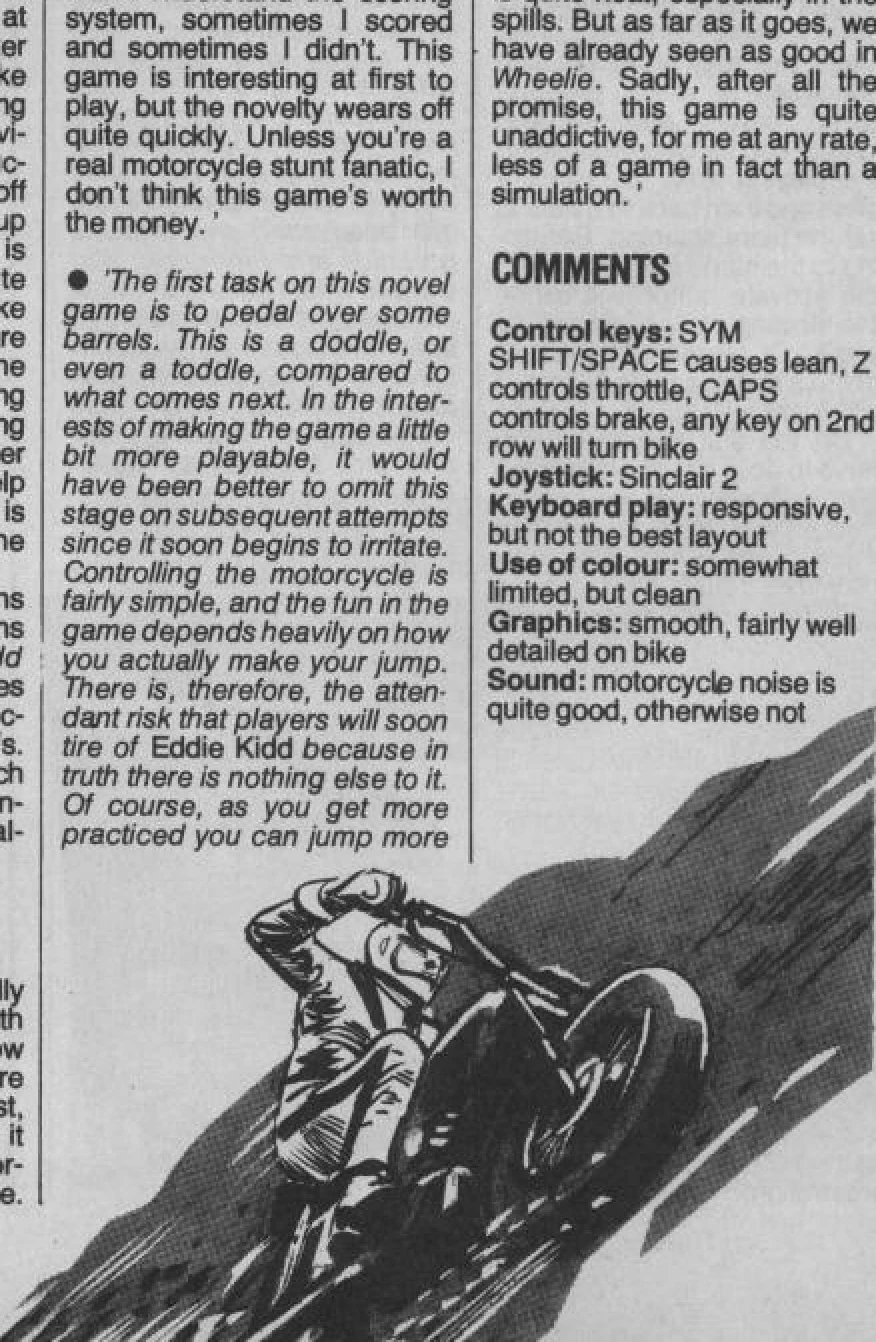
● 'Why does an essentially motorcycle game start off with a push bike jump? It may show how he started at first, or where he got his inspiration from first, but in this particular game it becomes very repetetive, boring and irrelevant to the game. The motorcycle seems to perform not unlike a real one, and in fact mimicks a real one very well in mid air. One thing I don't like about this game is if you fall of your bike by hitting cars, landing wrong or whatever, you return to the menu, giving you no second chance, which is probably a little mean, and also a major drawback. Also, I didn't understand the scoring system, sometimes I scored and sometimes I didn't. This game is interesting at first to play, but the novelty wears off quite quickly. Unless you're a real motorcycle stunt fanatic, I don't think this game's worth the money.'

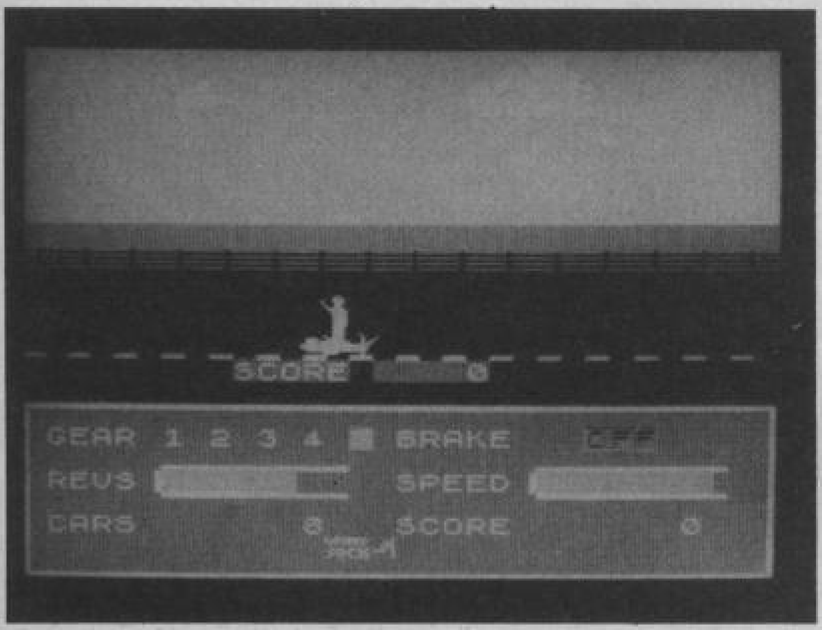
● *'The first task on this novel game is to pedal over some barrels. This is a doddle, or even a toddle, compared to what comes next. In the interests of making the game a little bit more playable, it would have been better to omit this stage on subsequent attempts since it soon begins to irritate. Controlling the motorcycle is fairly simple, and the fun in the game depends heavily on how you actually make your jump. There is, therefore, the attendant risk that players will soon tire of Eddie Kidd because in truth there is nothing else to it. Of course, as you get more practiced you can jump more and more cars etc., but I don't think this is going to prove enough to keep people playing, especially as the scenery doesn't change.'*

● '*Eddie Kidd* has some nice graphics, the background is simple enough, but the effect of movement works quite well, and the graphics of your biker is quite neat, especially in the spills. But as far as it goes, we have already seen as good in *Wheelie*. Sadly, after all the promise, this game is quite unaddictive, for me at any rate, less of a game in fact than a simulation.'

COMMENTS

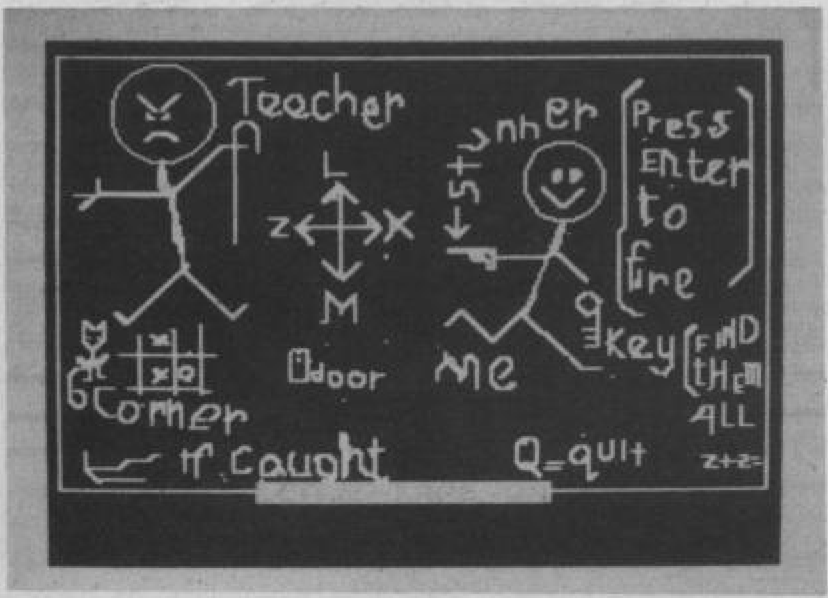
Control keys: SYM SHIFT/SPACE causes lean, Z controls throttle, CAPS controls brake, any key on 2nd row will turn bike
Joystick: Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: responsive, but not the best layout
Use of colour: somewhat limited, but clean
Graphics: smooth, fairly well detailed on bike
Sound: motorcycle noise is quite good, otherwise not





much
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 1
Screens: 1
Special features: competition
General rating: a good simulation, but as a game not over exciting and not particularly addictive.

Use of Computer	50%
Graphics	63%
Playability	68%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	30%
Value for money	48%
Overall	56%



A lively and atmospheric loading screen in BEATCHA gives no clue to the game graphics.

BEATCHA!

Producer: **Romik**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Jon Smith**

The struggle to put a sensible story line to arcade type games goes on - *Beatcha* certainly has pushed the limits in the sense that you won't get any idea of what the game looks like from either the title, inlay card or loading screen, with its similar look to that of *Skool Daze*. According to the scenario *Beatcha* is set in Quange Hill Comprehensive school on Sirius B. Putting it on an alien planet allows poetic licence in the look of the pupils and teachers!

The objective of the game is to negotiate the maze of crazy classrooms and collect all the keys so you can get out of the front door. This is Romik's first game for the Spectrum for a year, and to celebrate the fact, they are giving you 26 lives in this game, one for each letter of the alphabet. And you'll need them!!

Each screen represents corridors and classrooms, actually quite simple mazes made from character blocks in various diagonal shapes. Teachers come in blue, red and white, some slow, some very fast. If you get hit, you leave a skull behind which blocks your progress next life, or kills if you hit it. Collecting keys arms your stun gun, which can be used to momentarily stun the teachers. Access from screen to screen is via small doors, which may lead you to a totally different screen, or just to the next door one.

CRITICISM

● '*Beatcha* is a collect and avoid game. The graphics are simple and small but quick. This game is not bad, but I found that after getting quite a few keys I soon became bored. *Beatcha* is in the average league.'

● '*I think this game should have been brought out at least a year ago, at least then it may have stood a chance selling. As it is the concept, graphics and playability seems to be outdated. After collecting several screens of keys (or attempting to) I soon became very bored and tired, uninterested in fact. The game in many parts was much too difficult even on the easy level - on the difficult level it became stupidly fast and impossible to play. Colour has been used quite well, but the graphics are small, undetailed and move by the block - uninspiring. The actual object of the game is not stated very clearly. Whatever happened to the 'mouth-watering' inlays we used to have? I don't really think this is a game worth even considering unless you're into unexciting, brainless games.*'

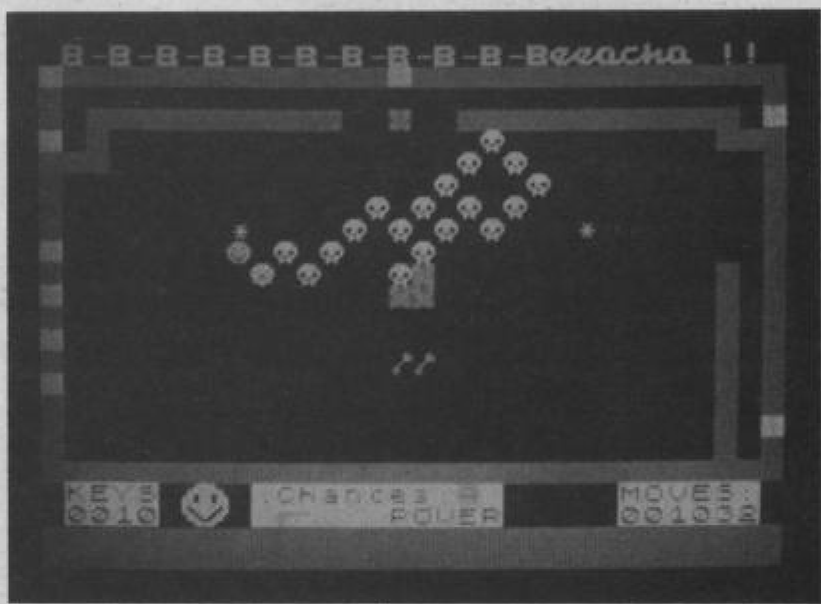
● '*Beatcha* looks very old fashioned once loaded, although the title screen promises much new looking fun. Just another boring old maze game - well not quite boring, perhaps. Ludicrously fast would be a better description, and somewhat confusing. Okay, so collecting keys to get out isn't confusing, neither is avoiding nasties, whether they be Sirius B teachers or aliens, but some othe the things that happen and aren't explained, are very odd. After such a long time when I thought Romik had gone for ever, here they are, back again - what a pity it couldn't have been a more inspiring game.'

COMMENTS

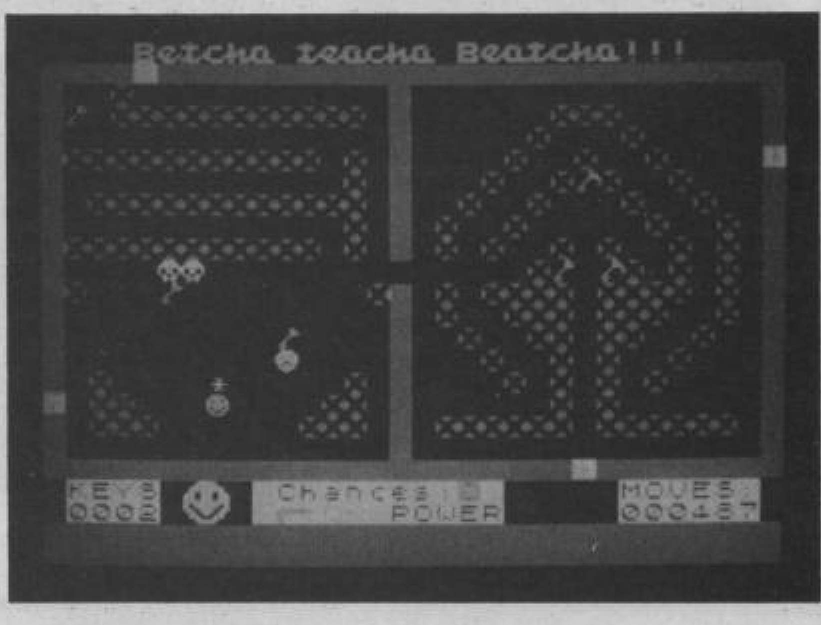
Control keys: Z/X left/right, L/M up/down, M to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair
Keyboard play: sensible positions, but not as responsive as they should be
Use of colour: quite good and varied
Graphics: small, undetailed, rather jerky block movement
Sound: quite strident effects
Skill levels: 3 - dunces, swots and big 'eds
Lives: 26
Screens: unknown but several
Special features:
General rating: poor and confusing.

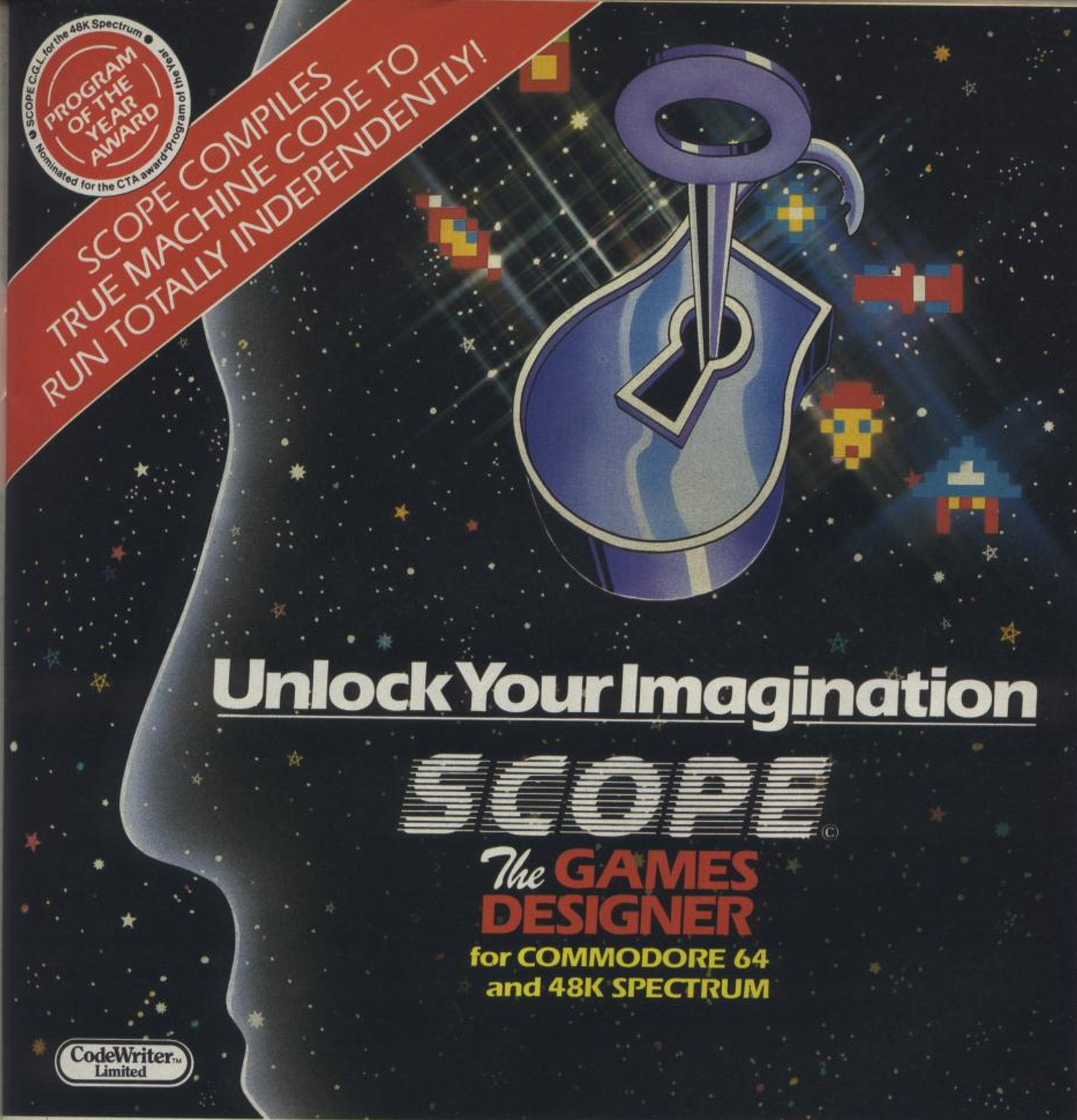


Use of computer	55%
Graphics	45%
Playability	27%
Getting started	42%
Addictive qualities	26%
Value for money	39%
Overall	**39%**



Rather old fashioned graphics moving at insane speed in BEATCHA.





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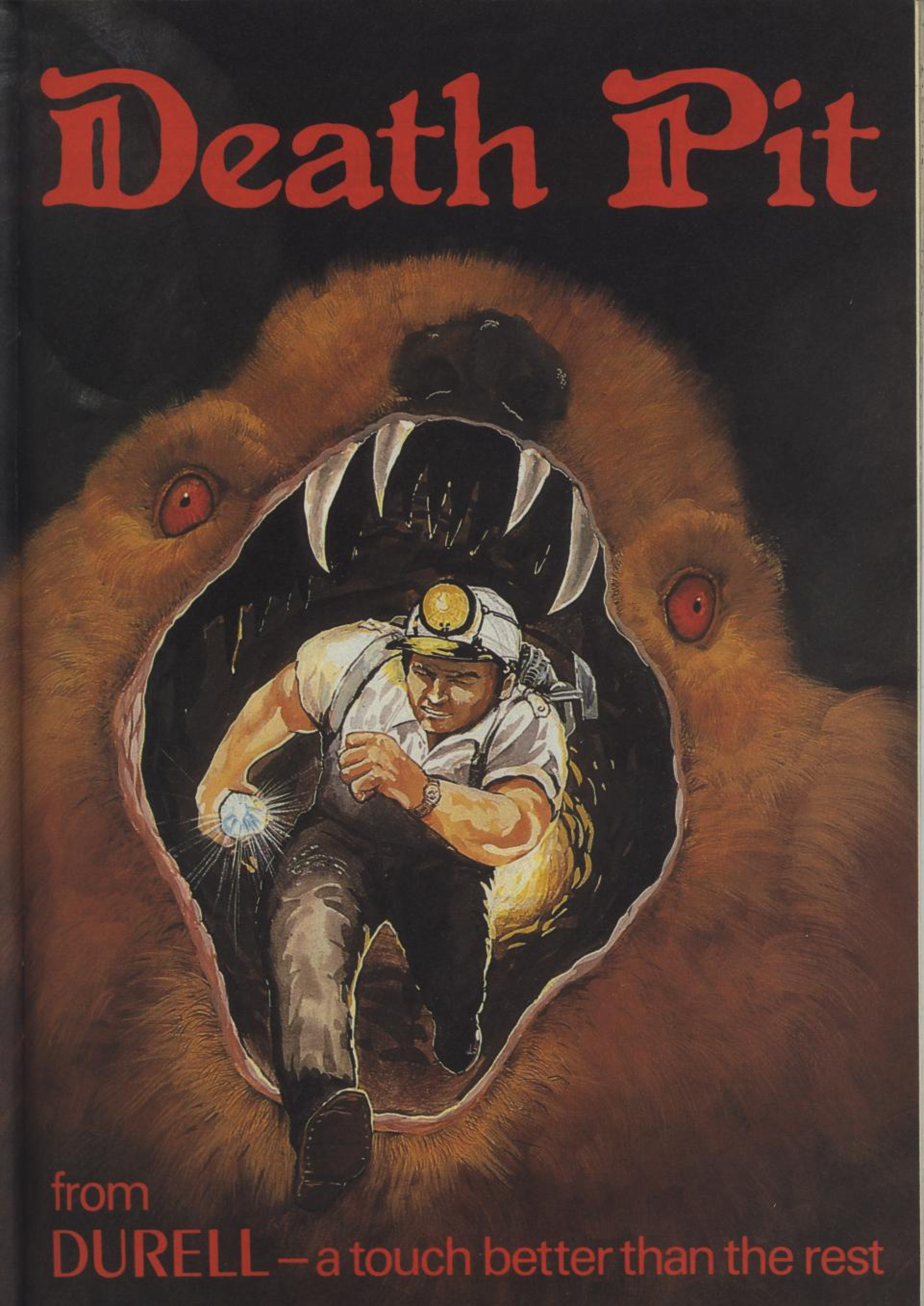
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Death Pit
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T·I·R N·A N·O·G

TIR NA NOG

Producer: **Gargoyle Games**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£9.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Greg Follis & Roy Carter**

Our recent preview of the new graphical adventure *Tir Na Nog*, which loosely translated means *Land of Youth* from **Gargoyle Games**, whose first game *Ad Astra* caused such a stir with its graphics, seems to have already aroused a lot of interest. *Tir Na Nog* is one of those games that is a review team's nightmare! There is such a lot of it to get through in a shortish space of time that it is inevitable we can only give a hint of the flavour.

Tir Na Nog is set in a mythical Celtic world peopled by the **Sidhe**. Once mighty, now fallen on hard times, these monkey-like creatures are the main protagonists in the adventure. They had bound the **Great Enemy** by creating the Seal of Calum, and thus had become a great civilisation. But the Great Eenemy had managed to steal the Seal by sending a thief. In their rage the Sidhe killed the thief but the Seal was shattered into four pieces and the Great Enemy freed to wreak havoc on the Earth again. So fell the Sidhe into sub-human beasts.

When the game opens, it is a new, darker age. You play **Cuchulainn**, the Hound of Heaven, a mighty warrior who has been called to reunite the four pieces of the Seal of Calum and thus defeat the Great Enemy. In this respect *Tir Na Nog* is definitely an adventure. You are required to explore, seek useful objects such as weapons and keys (some of whose uses are immediately apparent, and some are not), and interact with the other characters who inhabit the land. But it is not a text orientated adventure - text only plays a part in telling you where you are and what objects you are carrying, although occasionally there are situations where text will appear, such as the Oracle. There are puzzles to solve (the Oracle's obscure pronouncements are such), and there are many arcade situations where quick reactions are needed to stay alive.

The screen is split roughly into two sections - a top playing area, where the land is seen, and a lower information area which tells you where you are, what you are carrying or using, and most importantly, a compass. The hero Cuchulainn, moves left and right, but the scene may be viewed from four 'camera' positions which relate to the changing compass below.



An insidious Sidhe, creeping up behind Cuchulainn

Tir Na Nog comes in a large cardboard box which contains a 28 page booklet and a full colour map of the land. The booklet has playing instructions, a history of the land and playing tips contained very neatly within a supposed *Sealltuinn*, or 'observations' of a Bard of the Sidhe. The game may be saved at any point (to avoid constant death!) and reloaded.

CRITICISM

● 'What we have here is a game that desperately needs careful mapping by the player! The map provided is very useful in giving the general layout of the land, but as the booklet says, 'So many doors are there in Tir Na Nog that it has often been called the Land of Opportunity, because of the number of openings that exist. ' And there are hundreds of pathways. Because of the 3D world the program creates, but which you only really see in two dimensions at any time, it can get very confusing at first! The first time player would be well advised to ensure that he or she doesn't lose a life right outside the altar cave and so drop the axe picked up just inside, because a Sidhe prowls around on that path and makes it a hard job on a next life to get the axe back. And that's an important point - as in *Avalon*, objects used or dropped remain where they are, you affect the land every time you play and things are not reset to 'start'. The graphics are extremely good. Cuchulainn walks and fights with tremendous vigour. It's marvellous animation. The adventure quests are numerous, and this game is going to take a long time to get through, which makes it good value for money, and a must for adventurers and arcade players alike. '

● 'Tir Na Nog *requires the skills of adventure, strategy and arcade. Some of the creatures you just have to fight, and what with orienting yourself and moving, it can be quite a skill. But some are in possession of things you need, and you may have something they want, so strategical thinking and forward planning comes in as well. Colour has been well used so there are no attribute problems to spoil the look of it. All the animated characters are masked on the backgrounds, so they look realistic and can be easily seen. The*



sidhe are very good, but a damned nuisance! I have barely scraped the surface of this marvellous looking game, but as far as I have got, it is playable, fun and (not usually the case with an adventure) very addictive.'

● 'I didn't get to see the preview copy of *Tir Na Nog* earlier, but I had heard about it, and was looking forward to seeing it. Then I saw *The Legend of Avalon* and wondered whether *Tir Na Nog* wasn't going to be very similar. Well they are not at all alike, visually or in the playing, beyond the fact that in both games you do have to be able to think and move very quickly at times in what is a vast playing area. I like the idea in *Tir Na Nog* that access to the many major 'above' and 'below' ground places is done by way of caves which lead you from one place to the other. This game is also one of those that requires a lot of exploring and familiarising before you have a hope of getting onto the quests. Fortunately, the exploring itself is fun, and there is a lot to see. I just wonder whether there isn't too much walking about to do? I feel sure that *Tir Na Nog* is going to appeal widely because of the different things in it, and it's going to take a long time to get right through it and destroy the Great Enemy.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: corner keys for thrust, alternate bottom row for left/right, alternate second row for changing 'camera' view, alternate third row for pick up/drop
Joystick: none, but a programmable interface might prove useful here
Keyboard play: responsive - takes getting used to keys and views
Use of colour: black drawings on simple colour grounds, works well and looks fresh
Graphics: excellent animation, using many frames, large characters and smooth scrolling effects
Sound: not much, mostly warning beeps
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1, but the game constantly returns you to the start position, with effects of last life intact
Screens: continuous scrolling
Special features: map of Tir Na Nog
General rating: a sophisticated looking and playing game with masses of content, good value for money, generally excellent.

Use of computer	82%
Graphics	98%
Playability	93%
Getting started	95%
Addictive qualities	90%
Value for money	91%
Overall	92%



TRAVELS WITH TRASHMAN

Producer: New Generation
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Malcolm Evans**

The sequel to New Generation's successful and novel *Trashman* sees our intrepid dustman on an exotic trip around the major cities of the world as a sort of free-lance waste collection consultant. *Travels with Trashman* is set in Spain, the USA, Hong Kong, France, Germany, Israel and Samoa.

The object is to collect litter from the various sites and score points. On the right there is a cash figure which increases as you collect, but decreases if you keep bumping into people like waitresses or guests, or annoying them. This cash figure is important because unless you earn enough, you won't be able to afford the flight to anywhere else in the game. The Spanish part is set in the bull ring. Trashman has to collect all the bouquets of roses that the spectators keep throwing into the ring. But he has to watch out for the black bull, which gets increasingly angry. In the USA the scene is the streets of New Orleans, picking up the money being thrown at the jazz band, but the musicians are a mean lot. In Samoa, it's the beach, littered with holiday makers' rubbish, while overhead the ripe coconuts keep falling down. Israelis are noted for their wailing wall in Jerusalem - what few people realise is how many tissues are discarded by the tearful Jews. Parisian street cafes may look pleasant but there are loads of waiters, irritated diners and tons of frogs - it's the frogs that are the litter problem. Germany sees Trashie clearing away empties at the beerfest, while in Hong Kong there is a lively scene with a carnival.

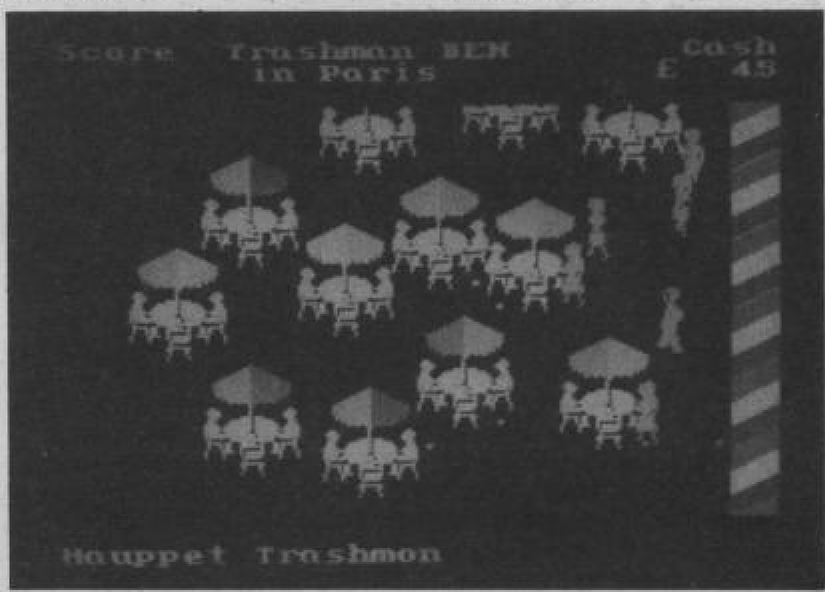
Each separate section of the game is accessed through a screen which shows the world globe and the various destinations.



CRITICISM

● 'I must say that I was looking forward to seeing the follow up to *Trashman* with its clearly defined bright graphics and a high degree of skill required to play it. Generally speaking I was immediately addicted to it. *Travels with Trashman*, however, is a different matter. I don't find it very addictive at all, and not really playable, just travelling around the world, going to find what rubbish you can collect to earn a living. In my opinion, it is not a very adequate follow up to a previous top seller. Graphics are quite pleasant to look at, but in most cases suffer with a high degree of attribute and clarity problems. Also, there seems to be a definite lack of colour in many areas. The graphics just don't look half as solid as in *Trashman*, and in mnay areas look quite weak. On some occasions Trashman (you, the character) is more often than not difficult to find on the screen for the simple reason that there's no outstanding colour of his own to show him up. This poses problems and loss of money and loss of time during the game. To be quite honest, if you enjoyed playing *Trashman* I cannot seriously say that you will enjoy playing *Travels with Trashman* because they are two totally different games based around the common factor of Trashman.'

● *'Travels with Trashman starts off with a realistic world map showing locations where you may go. The various places have slight differences to the basic task (collecting rubbish), like frogs in France. TWT has, in my opinion, graphics which are not quite as good as in the original, but it offers more variation. One thing is certain, this is no easy game, and you really have to earn your travel money. The game should stand the test of time well.'*



Frogs begin at Calais, and get quite out of hand in Paris. Can TRASHMAN get enough cash together to TRAVEL somewhere else?.

● 'Part of the game is to get to see the various locations. This is not possible at the start because you are never given enough cash to fly to the more exotic ones, this has to be earned, otherwise you may find youself restricted to one or two, or even stranded. As in *Trashman*, there are humourous comments at the bottom of the screen, when you bump into people, or at the end of a game. I very quickly got gored by the bull in Madrid and was informed that by (meagre) 30 bouns points would be flown back home (presumably for the poor destitute family). On some screens the graphics work very well and the game is jolly. But there are some where this is not so good, and generally the game lacks the intensity that *Trashman* had. This lowers its addictivity considerably. I think it's likely to appeal widely but I doubt that it will have the staying power of the earlier game because the playability has been dissipated by the fact that less attention to detail has gone into each of the different locations, than went into the suburban *Trashman*.

COMMENTS

Control keys: user defined, four directions and fire (used for option selection only)
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Cursor type
Keyboard play: responsive
Use of colour: varied, but not as colourful as *Trashman* and there are some attribute problems
Graphics: again, varied and neatly animated, but generally a bit small
Sound: nice tunes, not much in play apart from some spot effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1
Screens: 7
Special features:
General rating: mixed opinions from the reviewers from above average to very good.

Use of computer	**79%**
Graphics	**70%**
Playability	**68%**
Getting started	**72%**
Addictive qualities	**63%**
Value for money	**76%**
Overall	**71%**



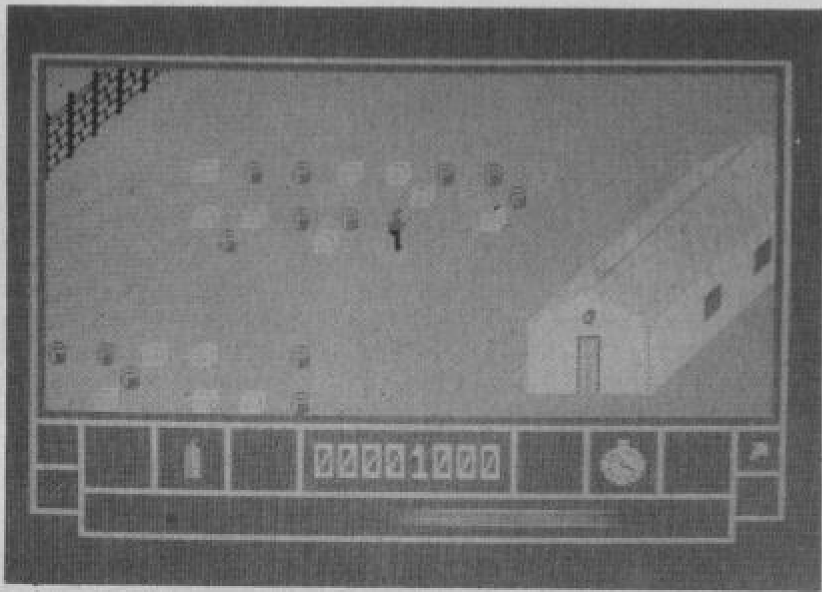

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20890
00:13:12
2 UP
4350
AD ASTRA

ALL OR NOTHING

Producer: **Abbex**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95 / £6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Paul Reynolds**

All or Nothing is the first game from Abbex since *Krakatoa*, which was a CRASH smash in the Spring. To describe all the playing instructions for this game would take an age as it is somewhat complicated. However, the basic objective is to parachute into an armed camp and more or less detroy it, and in the process find some secret files. Although *All or Nothing* is basically an arcade game which uses isometric perspective graphics rather similar to those in *Ant Attack*, there are also some elements of strategy and adventure.

On screen, the playing area shows a part of the enemy camp with its high wire fences around the perimeter. Directing 'you' causes the screen to scroll to follow the action. As in *Ant Attack* there are four camera views for when you get hidden behind a building, but this function is automatically activated if you do disappear from view. Inside the perimeter there are several buildings, some of which are warehouses, some are offices. The camp is patrolled by lots of guards and guard dogs. The guards are armed and shoot to kill. Below the playing area is the score line, time and six graphics depicting objects which may be collected or used. Movement around the camp is by means of a left and right rotation with a forward movement, which leaves fire and back on a joystick free for select and use (an object).



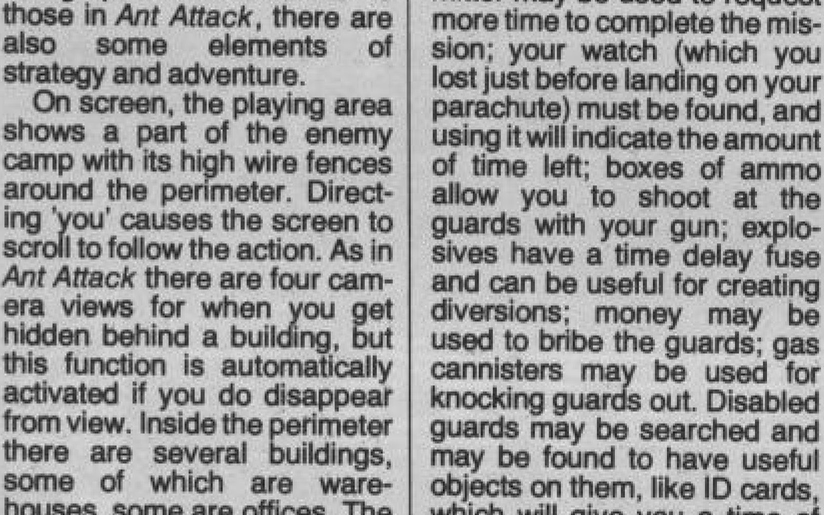
3D graphics not unlike those in Ant Attack characterise the new Abbex game ALL OR NOTHING.

Of the objects, the transmitter may be used to request more time to complete the mission; your watch (which you lost just before landing on your parachute) must be found, and using it will indicate the amount of time left; boxes of ammo allow you to shoot at the guards with your gun; explosives have a time delay fuse and can be useful for creating diversions; money may be used to bribe the guards; gas cannisters may be used for knocking guards out. Disabled guards may be searched and may be found to have useful objects on them, like ID cards, which will give you a time of immunity. But most things you will need can be found within the warehouses.

Before you can search any of the warehouses you must first discover the office and break the code on the safe (within 30 seconds). This will result in giving you a key to a specific warehouse which you must discover. In this first warehouse you will find the key to another, and so on. Also inside there are various of the useful objects. You can only collect objects that you do not possess or are low on.

At any time (after entering the main office) you may leave the site via the Matter Transmitter. The overall object is to collect the secret industrial files and make good your escape.

The patrolling guards are closing in – time to bribe, shoot or run. . .



CRITICISM

● 'A variation on the *Ant Attack* idea with more content seems like a good idea. Here there are several tasks etc. which make the game last a little longer. The graphics are represented in good 3D, but as in *Ant Attack*, controlling the man is a liitle less satisfactory. Overall, a pretty good game which takes time to get into. Quite a few nice touches too, like the bouncing END titles to a game.'

● 'All or Nothing *is a very good game with very good graphics. It is also an interesting game and true to life, as the guards do not often see you if you are lurking behind a building and they come rushing after you if you make a loud noise (like shooting a gun or using the gas). The safe combination is a hard one to crack, but once you do it is all plain sailing. It's a pity that the playing area is so small, only 10 buidlings in all, and the sound isn't as good as the graphics. Otherwise, an interesting and playable game.'*

● 'I liked *Krakatoa* very much, and was therefore looking forward to this one. And at the start it doesn't disappoint either, with the effective 3D graphics and a level of control that has avoided the pitfalls of *Ant Attack*. There also seems a lot to do, but once you really get into it, *All or Nothing* reveals that it isn't as hot as it first seems. In the end all you are doing is running around, avoiding the guards and trying to collect objects from different buildings. The result, for me at any rate, is a very playable game which does require skill, but one that lacks something in the long term appeal. Good, but not great.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable - a graphic of the Spectrum shows you the keys you may not select
Joystick: almost any via UDK
Keyboard play: responsive, although control takes some getting used to
Use of colour: average
Graphics: neat 3D although rather jerky scrolling
Sound: average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1 with percentage of damage
Screens: continuous scrolling
Special features: Currah Microspeech compatible
General rating: generally good, not perhaps as addictive as expected, but certainly has lots of content.

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	76%
Playability	71%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	66%
Value for money	70%
Overall	**72%**



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KUNG FU

Producer: **Bug-Byte**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Dusko Dimitrijevic**



Haiiiii...

This is probably the most unusual game to be seen on the Spectrum for a long while, perhaps ever. As its name suggests, the game is a simulation of the noble art of defence and attack. There are two modes of play for one player against the computer, or for two players against each other.

The one and two-player modes each have a different background of suitably oriental design. The playing characters are quite large, animated line drawings which faithfully follow your commands. Four movements are possible, a left arm karate chop, a step forward and block, a right foot front kick and a left foot back kick. Additionally the character may be advanced or retreated.

Below the playing area is an indicator of hits on the computer player. A successful knock out strike results in the hit character collapsing to the ground. The more successful you are on the single player mode, the tougher the computer player becomes to beat. Now everyone has the chance to become a grasshopper...



CRITICISM

● '*Kung Fu* is a totally original game. The graphics are very large and allow you and a friend to beat hell out of each other. Each of the Kung Fu moves is beautifully animated. As you get better you move up belts, white to yellow etc. The sound is good with a good tune playing continuously. This is very playable and quite addictive. I don't know how long this will keep you occupied, but it's still a good game on the face of it. If you want a change from the usual type of game, this is worth it.'

● '*It must be said that this is an exceptional attempt to reproduce a very difficult sport on a computer, and it has been totally successful in achieving its ends. Characters take about half the playing area (in height) and are superbly animated. The option of playing the computer or an opponent is a great asset to this game, allowing friends to join in for a bit of variation. Obviously the person who programmed this game is into Kung Fu as each move is executed the way it should be. The only niggle I've got about the game is that there is no on/off switch for the oriental music which can drive you around the bend. I have mixed feelings about whether this game will be constantly addictive, as it does get repetetive kicking your partner's teeth in or crippling his sex life!*'

● 'The first thing to strike you about *Kung Fu* is the lovely graphics. The backgrounds are exactly right, and manage to be quite soothing to watch as you match wits with either computer or a friend. At times the movements of the two characters can look like a piece of ballet. *Kung Fu* is a brave and almost entirely successful simulation. Perhaps the only complaint in the end might be that once mastered, it would be nice to have some other moves to try out. As it is, this should prove interesting, different and challenging and for its novelty value, worth the money.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: 1, 2, 3, 4 for left player (or solo) 6, 7, 8, 9 for right player, with CAPS SHIFT and SYM SHIFT walk left, Z and SPACE walk right
Joystick: Kempston and Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: responsive, key positions work quite well
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: excellent animation
Sound: constant tune (could do with on/off)
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 3
Screens: 2
Special features:
General rating: original and overall very good.

Use of computer	78%
Graphics	82%
Playability	80%
Getting started	77%
Addictive qualities	71%
Value for money	76%
Overall	**77%**

TILER

Producer: **Interceptor Micros**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.50**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **Stephen Curtis**

You have been contracted by Acme (what else) Construction to go and tile the roof of Rob Rubber's roof. But this task is frustrating because Rob is a bouncer - he bounces all over the place like a manic deep sea diver in an over-pressurised suit. If he should land on you, then you're squashed flat.

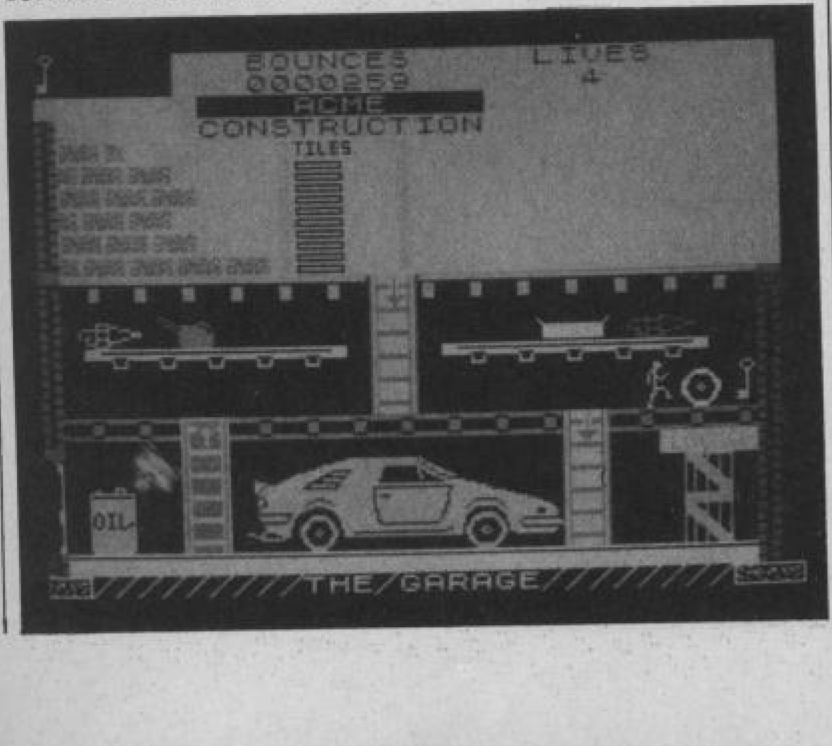
The game is played out over three screens, the inside of the house, the garden and the garage. Nothing is quite as straight forward as it first seems - stairs are all one way, a key is needed to get through the garage to the garden, and from there you go up past the tree house onto the garage roof to collect the tiles. Tiles and key are collected by running over them, and as the tiles are deposited on the roof, they automatically appear in place, ready for you to go and collect another one. There is a panic button to press if you can't avoid being squashed by Rob, but you forfeit any tile carried at the time.

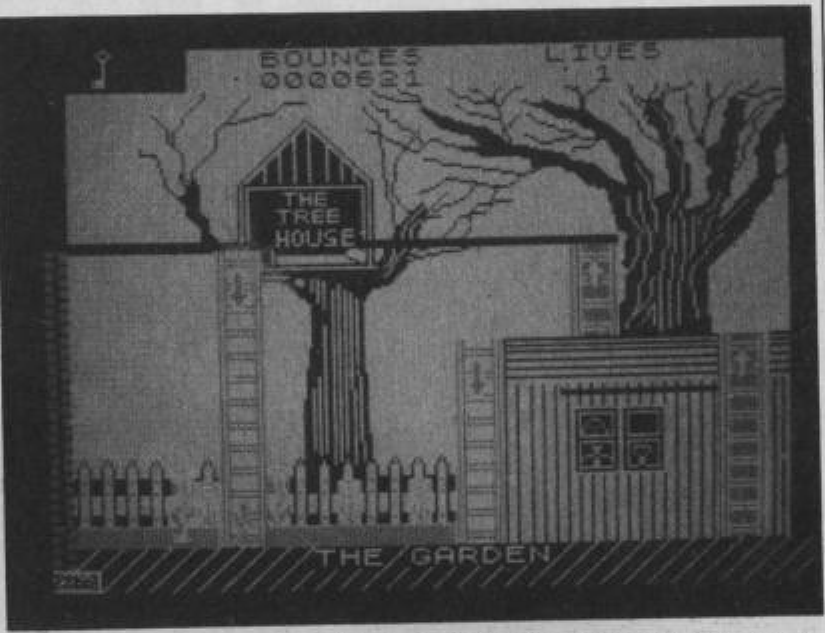
CRITICISM

● 'What a jolly looking game this seemed to be when first looking at it. What a shame, instead of the stickman there could have been someone a bit fatter walking about for you. Playing the game is quite easy, except for the fact that Rob bounces about rather wildly and unpredictably. After discovering the way of collecting tiles to be placed on the roof and working my way back through the screens to get to the roof, something became distinctly apparent about this game - it was going to be very tedious and long-winded. This is a major let down of the game. *Tiler* lacks an enormous ammount of content and has no instant or lasting appeal.'

● *'Tiler would quite possibly win a prize for one of the silliest scenarios ever written. Before making comments on the game itself, I would like to point out that the Hall of Fame is really frustrating. Onto the game; the background is filled up rather well and the graphics are good, but the actual characters are not over impressive. Playability is okay at first as you have to find out where to go etc. , but it soon becomes repetetive - addictivity thus suffers. Not, I suppose, a bad game, but this fetch and carry type scenario is now wearing a little thin - I mean, in this case avoiding a rubber man while you tile a roof is not ultra-challenging. To fill the roof takes many tiles - you will probably lose a life while falling asleep.'*

● 'Tiler is a very infuriating game. The graphics are, at first glance, very good, but they seem to look worse when you examine the two character moving around. The one-way stairs are about the only hazard in this game, you don't even have to work out a routine to get around the screens. By the time I'd tiled half the roof I had become very bored with this one.'



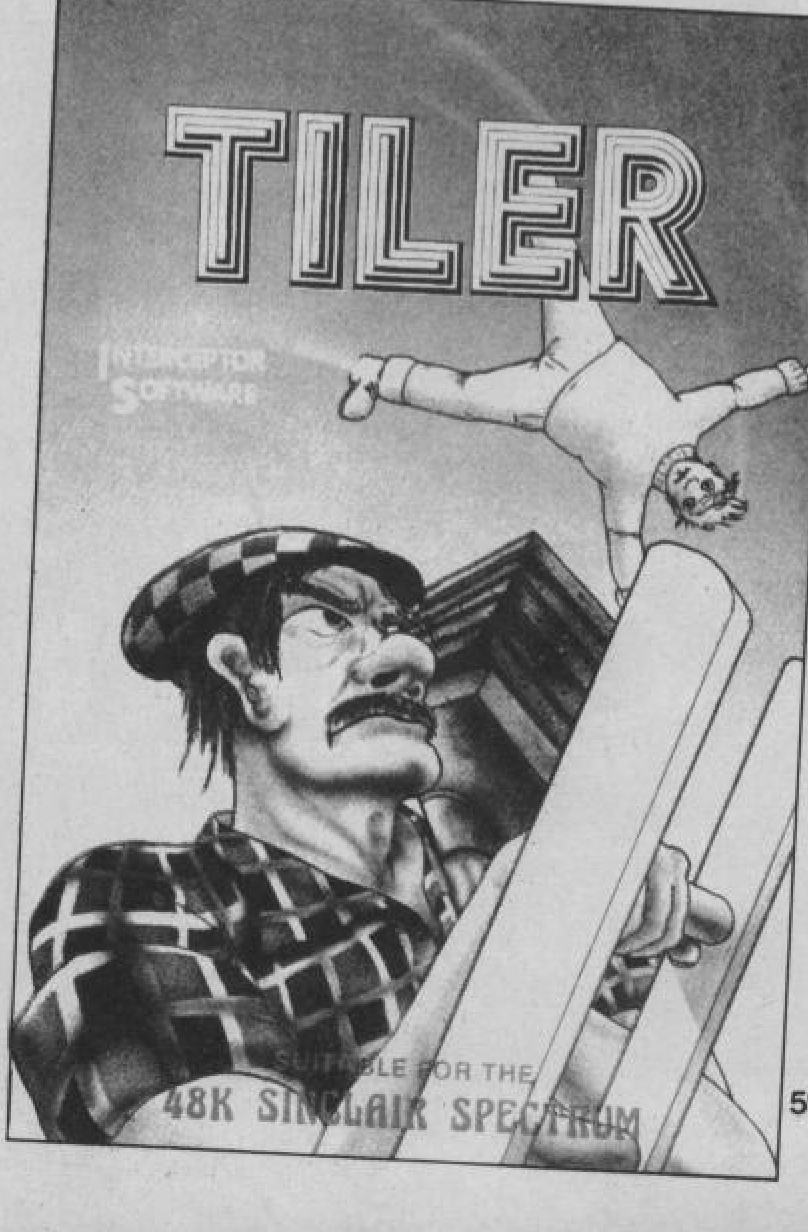


The way up to the garage roof is via the tree house. Good looking backgrounds but poor character in TILER.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, O/P left/right, SPACE to panic
Joystick: Sinclair 2, Kempston, Protek
Keyboard play: good positions, very responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: good backgrounds, poor animnated characters
Sound: average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 5
Screens: 3
Special features:
General rating: repetetive, lacking in content and ultimately below average.

Use of computer	72%
Graphics	61%
Playability	50%
Getting started	63%
Addictive qualities	39%
Value for money	54%
Overall	**57%**



the LLAMA has LANDED!

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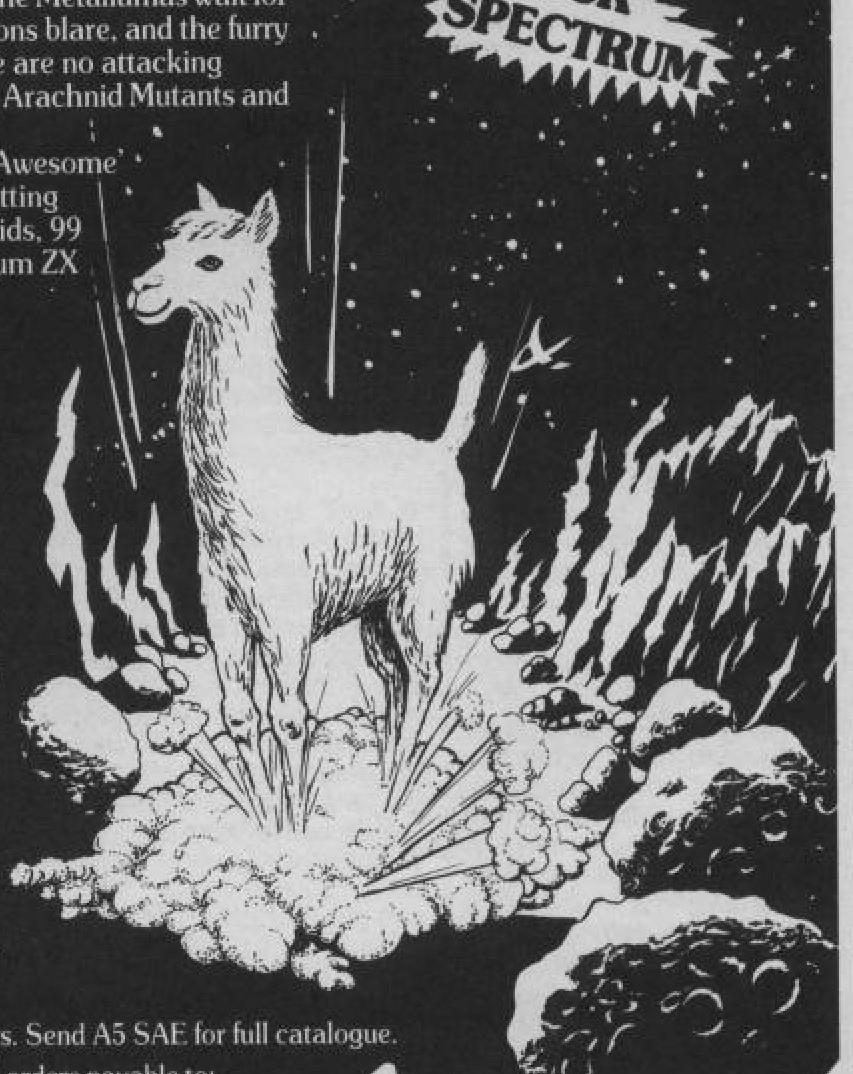
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Game originally developed by Jeff 'Awesome' Minter of Llamasoft. Joystick recommended. Supports Kempston and AGF joystick interfaces.

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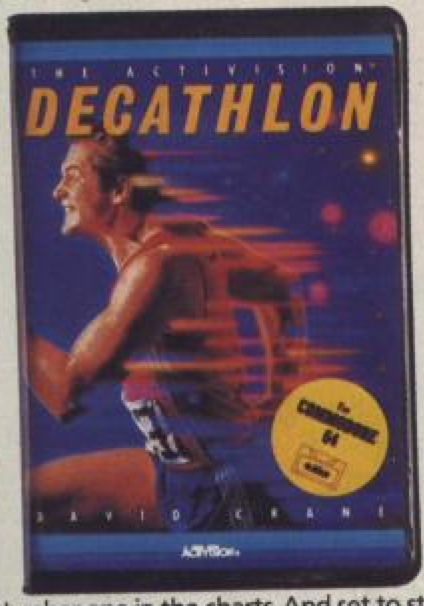


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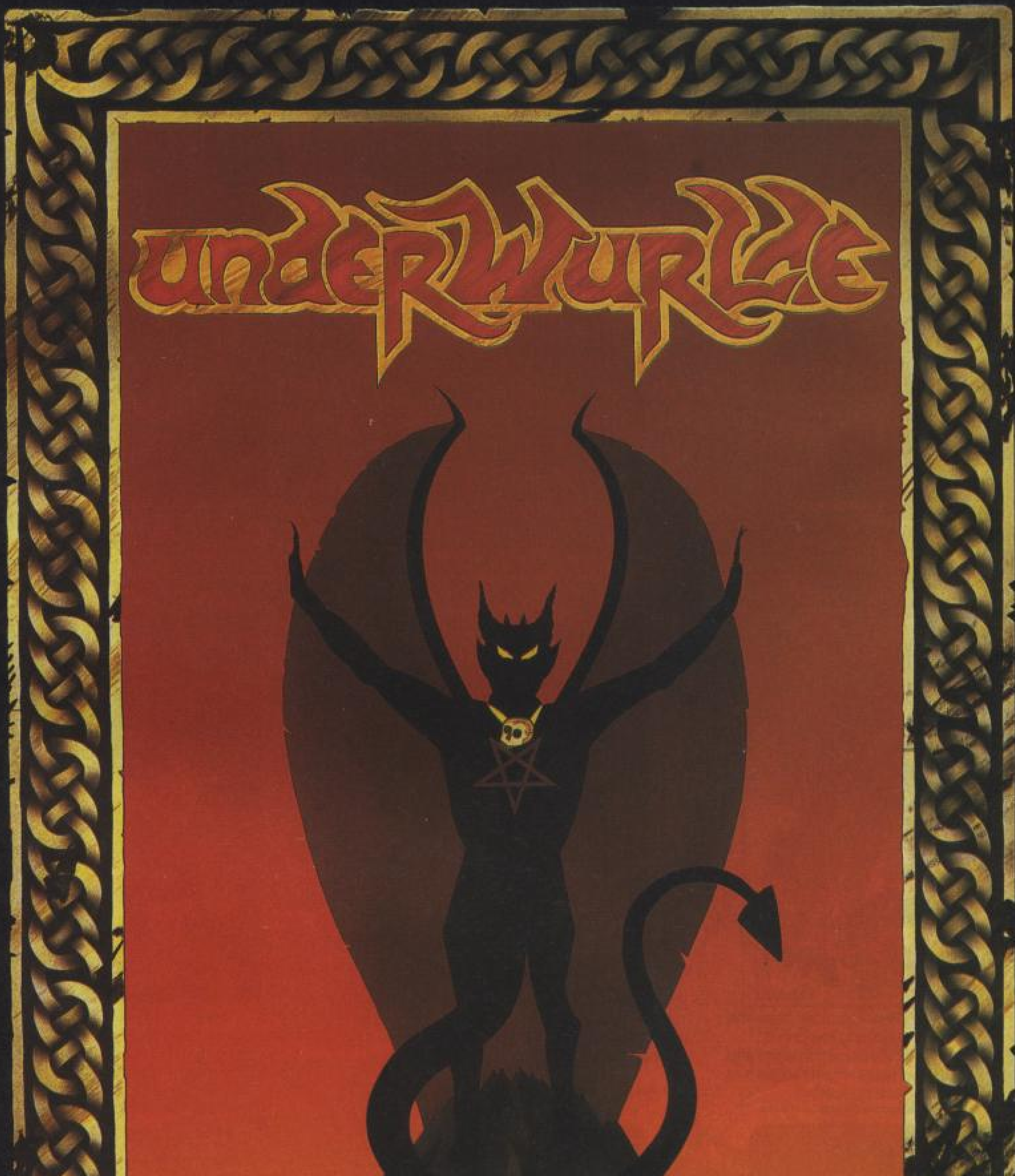
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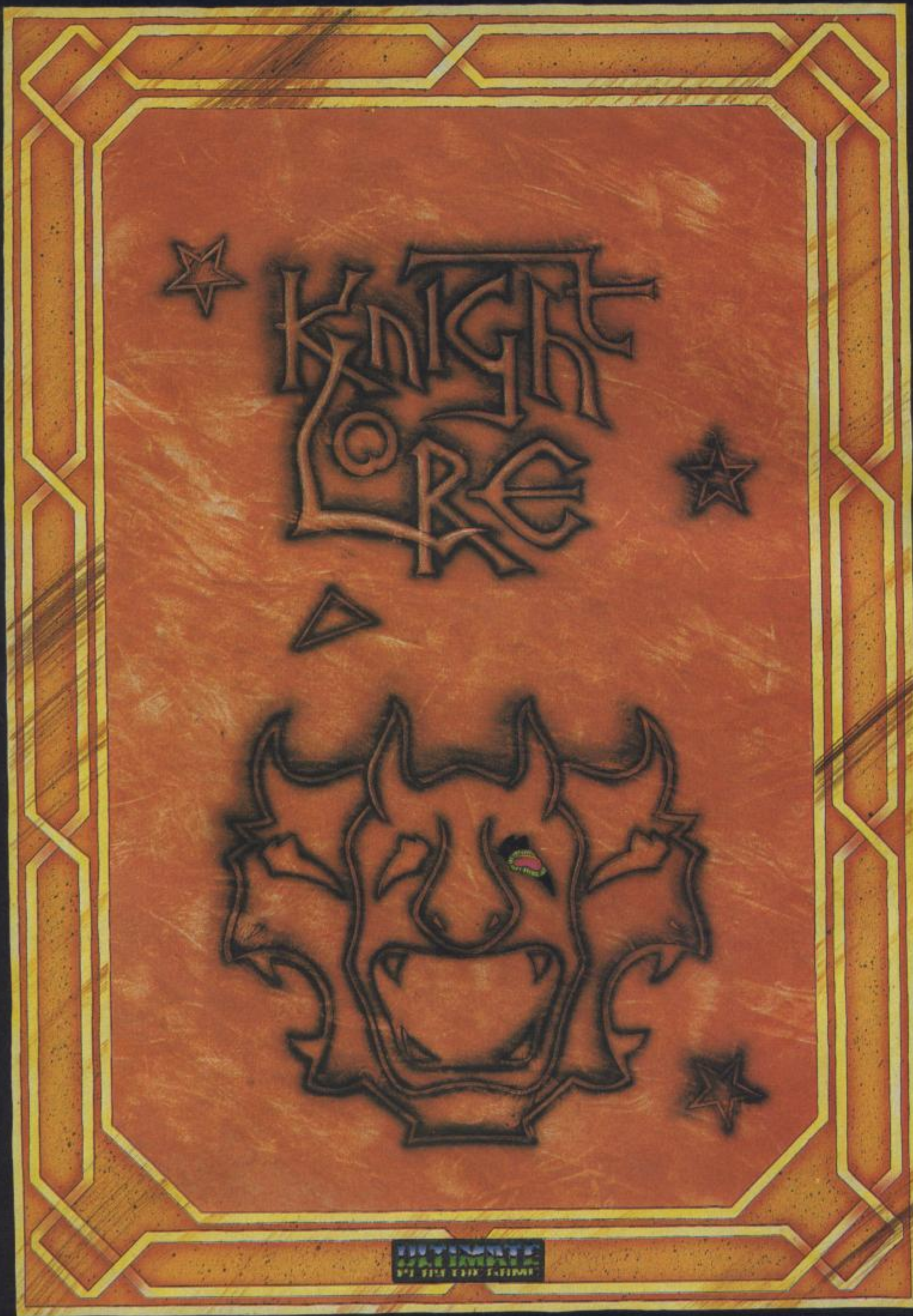
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48K SINCLAIR ZX SPECTRUM



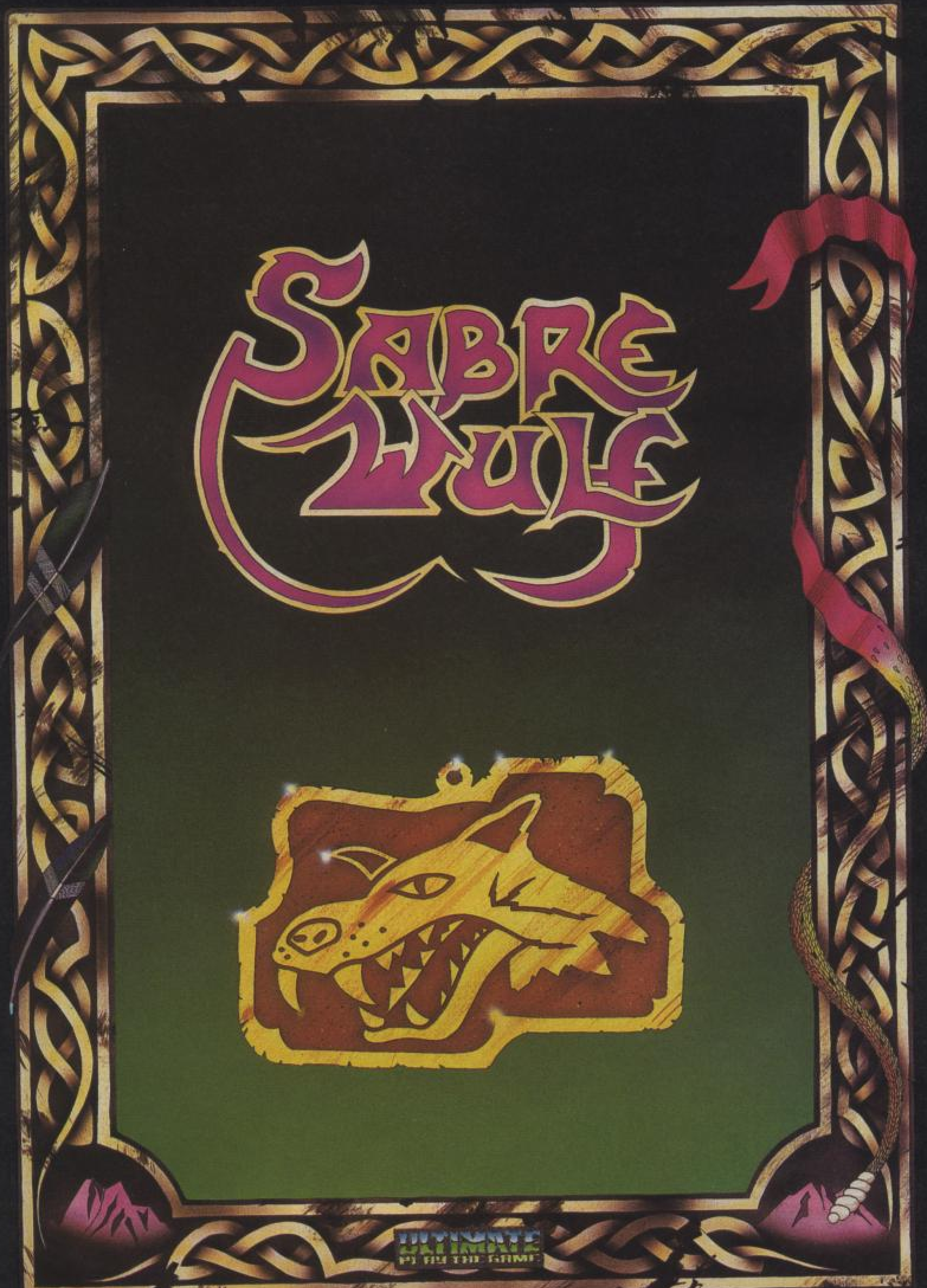
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BBC MODEL B 1·2 OS



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SAVE TIME ITSELF
With DORCAS SOFTWARE and

Crash Competition

RUNES OF Z

Prizes worth over £500 to be won including Interface 1 and Microdrive, £10 gift vouchers and 50 copies of *The Runes of Zendos*.

When it was released last year *Oracle's Cave* caused much excitement. It was a very 'different' sort of adventure game with its animated graphjiocs and flexible fighting scenario. Inevitably, we received many letters asking when was the follow up coming out. Well, now it's ready -- *The Runes of Zendos*.

'**Dorcas Software** specialises in adventure games which are aimed at a wide audience,' says **Chris Dorrell** who, together with his wife **Linda**, owns and runs the company. 'So we put features into our games which will appeal to differing interests. *The Runes of Zendos* for example hs fighting, problem solving, interesting graphics and the runic puzzle which is a real brain teaser.'

Dorcas Software began life as Doric Computer Services in 1981. Chris Dorrell wrote games for the ZX81 and Spectrum, but only as a hobby at first. In October 1983 the business was launched on a full time basis to provide the necessary support for *Oracle's Cave*, which has been a huge success. Chris Dorrell then set about the task of writing the follow up which is now being released – *The Runes of Zendos*.

Chris Dorrell has worked in data processing for 18 years as systems analyst, data processing manager and finally manager of information systems for a local company. During this time he has gained a wide experience of mainframes business systems and database technology, which is all going into the programming and production of adventures like *The Runes of Zendos*. A database approach has been adopted to all data and graphics in the new adventure, which says Chris, is 99.9% machine code. In addition to this competition in CRASH, **Dorcas** plan one based on the product itself for those who buy it.





THE RUNES OF ZENDOS

The new adventure is actually a number of different adventures with shared and unique features. Input routine is full sentence with an extensive vocabulary. All the locations are depicted graphically and described in text with screen scrolling as the player moves to a new location, and the graphics are solid, detailed drawings.

The creatures encountered in *The Runes of Zendos* are fully animated using a specially developed sprite technique – no matchstick monsters! Getting round monsters is not the only conundrum for the player, as there is a range of fascinating and perplexing problems to solve in each adventure. And to succeed overall, the player will have to crack the 'runic code' which appears in clues and spells throughout the game. Chris has added sound effects, not normally a strong point in adventures, to add to the atmostphere, and of course the game can saved or loaded to microdrive at any point.

The Runes of Zendos is for the 48K Spectrum and retails at £7.95 – **but 50 lucky CRASH readers now have the chance to get a copy absolutely free by entering this competition!!**

DORCAS COMPETITION

All you have to do is answer the six questions below – there really shouldn't be much difficulty – any experienced adventurer should know where to find the answers to any of the questions! Write the answers on a postcard (or outside of a sealed envelope) and send them in to: **DORCAS COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive by first post **December 7**.

The first 50 correct entries out of the bag will each receive a copy of *The Runes of Zendos* by Dorcas Software. In addition, the first five will also win a **£10 Gift voucher** and the very first will also receive the Dorcas Super Prize of an **Interface 1 and Microdrive**!!

THE QUESTIONS

1. **In the Runes of Zendos, who has captured time?**
2. **In which principality does he live?**
3. **How many adventures are there in the Runes of Zendos?**
4. **Who wrote the new release and its predecessor, the Oracle's Cave?**
5. **Name one adventure game written by CRASH Adventure Trail columnist, Derek Brewster.**
6. **Name this tune:–**

```
  5  BEEP .3,8
 10  BEEP .5,13
 15  BEEP .15,8
 20  BEEP .3,5
 25  BEEP .3,6
 30  BEEP .15,8
 35  BEEP .5,13
 40  BEEP .3,15
 45  BEEP .15,17
 50  BEEP .15,17
 55  BEEP .15,17
 60  BEEP .15,15
 65  BEEP .15,15
 70  BEEP .15,15
 75  BEEP .6,13
100  STOP
```


A prophecy is about to be fulfilled. The Dead will rise again to eat the flesh of the living...
Zombie Zombie
From the authors of ANT ATTACK, Sandy White and Angela.
DJR
Softsolid 3D* from SPACEMAN
*Patent pending
48K Spectrum £6.95
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WHSMITH
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John Menzies
and leading multiple retailers and specialist computer stores.

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I·N·P·U·T·

Projects co-ordinator for Studio B will be **Alan Giles**, who has already written two books for Melbourne House, the Spectrum Micronet book and Quick QL Machine Language. The second programmer to join Studio B is **Stephen Cargill**, a school leaver who has just finished his A levels. Stephen has written Melbourne House's latest release, *Sir Lancelot*. Another item from Melbourne House is a new book called *Learning with Adventure Pograms* written by **Ms Rosetta McLeod**. The book is designed to show how computers can help children to take an interest in the areas of reading, comprehension and logic. The book describes four computer games in detail, *The Hobbit, Valhalla, The Quill*, and *Snowball*. In the case of *Valhalla* Ms McLeod has taken the CRASH review of the game as part of the general theme.

GAMES COMPILATION

The music industry has for years made old hits into new ones by releasing compilation albums of the charted songs from the previous year. Now the same thing is happening with computer games. **Computer Records** has just released *Select 1*, a single tape featuring no less than 12 hit games including favourites like *Hunchback* and*Mr Wimpy* from Ocean, *Timegate* and *Meteor Storm* from Quicksilva, *Pool* and *Spectres* from Bug-Byte, and for adventurers, Application's *Denis Through the Drinking Glass*.

Select 1 is being marketed in conjunction with Telestar Records and the tape is being backed by a half million pound TV advertising campaign.

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IT'S A SWITCH ON

If it bugs you having to reset or switch on and off your Spectrum by removing the power plug, TEC offers an intriguing looking device which turns out to be a simple on/off switch. The shape of the unit is curious to say the least. In fact, after a short thinking session (not something often done here in the CRASH editorial offices for lack of volunteers) somebody just took the thing and plugged it into the Spectrum power socket, leaving a Toblerone shaped top towering above the Spectrum profile. This action provided a full frontral view of a rocker switch and somebody had the bright idea (it can only have been a disinterested CRASH visitor) of connecting the power lead to the free female socket at the rear before rocking the switch. The Spectrum came to life but it soon became apparent that the switch was not the only thing a'rocking. A Velcro pad is fixed to the underside of the Toblerone and once the protective backing is removed, the rocker assembly gets stuck in position. Whether anybody is prepared to spend £4.95 in protection money for the old abused power plug or just stick to eating the delicious but expensive Toblerone chocolate is to be seen.

The switch unit is available from **TEC, 24 Victoria Road, Bromsgrove, Worcs. B61 0DW. Tel. No. (0527) 74567 f1**



N·E·W·S I·N·P·U·T·...

IMAGINE - THE INSIDE STORY!

The story of **Imagine** has yet to be told in full, but there are indications that 'Dallas' and 'Dynasty' have nothing over 'Imagine' - except perhaps Joan Collins. For anyone with an interest in computer games and especially Imagine, what happened, how it happened and what exactly are the 'mega-games', don't miss the special programme on BBC2 on the 13th December at 8pm. Under the series heading 'Commercial Breaks', Paul Anderson and his team, who have been filming Imagine since early this year, will reveal the secrets. He will also be talking to CRASH about what it was like to be working with the giant Liverpool company through its collapse, and what happened afterwards. We'll be bringing you the story in the Christmas Special which comes out on the same day as the BBC2 programme.

Reviewed next month: SKY RANGER from Microsphere



NEW BUDGET RANGE

With the backing of a major European Company, **Micro Mart Software** has released a range of Spectrum software at a price of £1.99 per tape. the first software house to publish educational software at budget prices. ' The two educational programs are *World Flags* and *Junior Maths Pack*. The other games are the adventure *Golden Hawk* and *Gambler*. These are in addition to their higher priced games *Strike Attack 2* and *Sub Hunter*.

Software Projects have also gone in to the budget software market, releasing six titles for the Spectrum at £2.99 each under the name of **Software Supersavers**. These include the titles *Freex, Moonlighter, Ziggurat, Loony Lander, Fred's Fan Factory* and *Shuttle Shock*. Software Projects say that these games are not rehashes of old games as some budget software can be. but totally original games developed by Software Supersavers themselves. Reviews will follow in the next issue.





Sandy White and Angela are presented with the Gold Cassette by Anne Nightingale for the outstanding performance of ANT ATTACK.

GOLDEN ANTS!

Sandy White, whose most recent game is *Zombie Zombie* released through Quicksilva, has been awarded a Gold Cassette in recognition of the outstanding performance of *Ant Attack*. The award was presented by Radio One's deejay Anne Nightingale.

Ant Attack has now topped the 50, 000 mark in sales and is said to be rapidly heading for the hundred. Gold Cassettes are only awarded when sales exceed 50, 000. Previous to this the only other Gold Cassette presented in the industry was for *Time Gate* written by **John Hollis.**

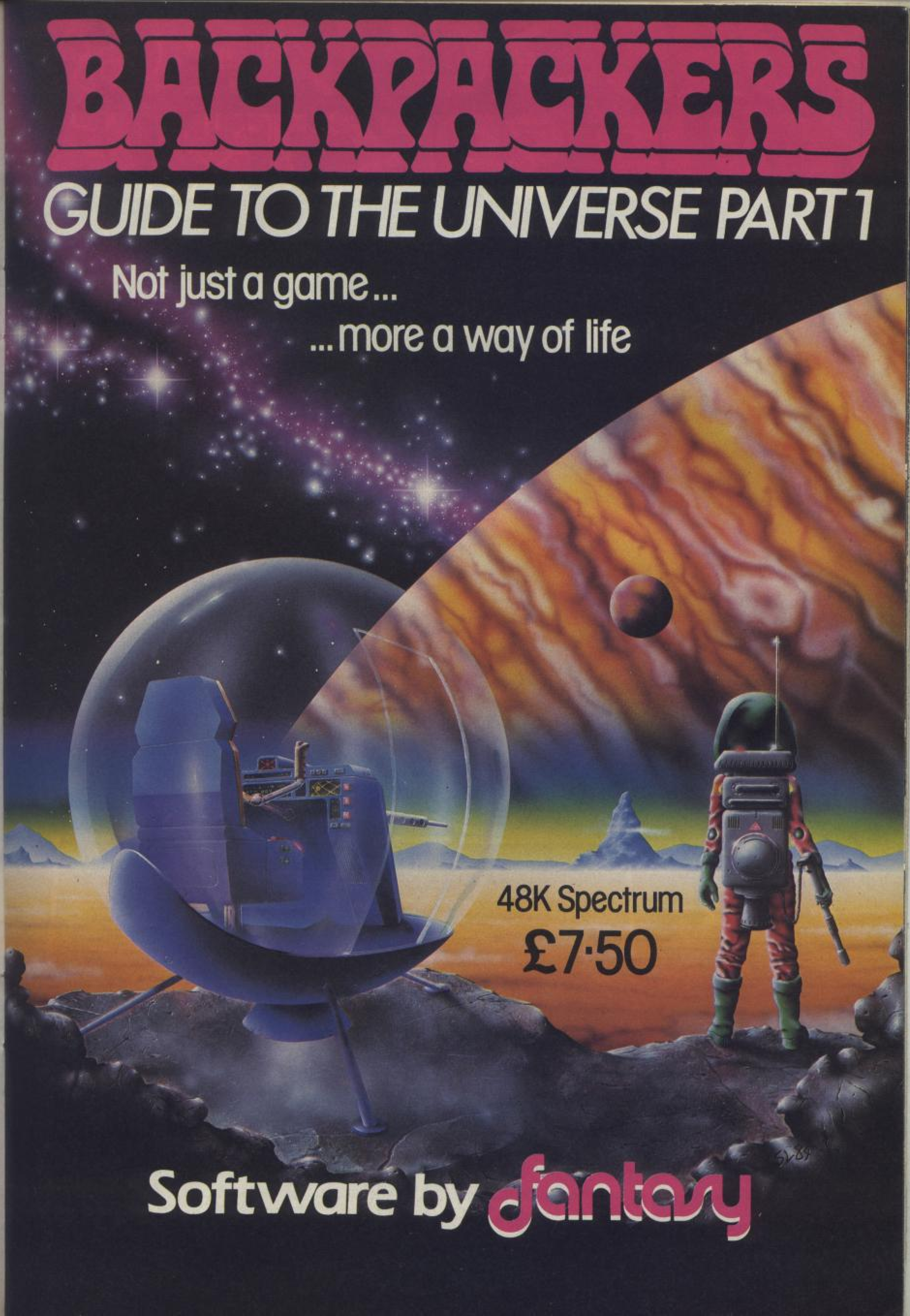
SUPERMUTT

Our review of Silversoft's new game *Supermutt* (November issue) was done from a preview copy and since then there have been a number of changes. One CRASH reviewer noted that he was a bit disappointed with the end - now Supermutt has to fly the rescued Pup back to HQ to complete the game. Another important change can be found in any of the rooms. In the preview copy the code letters flitted across the screen. Now there is a button in the centre of the room which must be reached and pressed before the code letter will even appear. If you hit an un-needed code letter or the button after having pressed it once, then you will be killed. These alterations have made Supermutt more of a challenge than it was when first reviewed.

HIGHWAY CODE

The Highway Code is to appear on computer. **C. R. L.** has produced a program containing over a hundred questions, all of which can be found within the book produced by Her Majesty's Stationery Office. The user is given a percentage rating from whichever test he or she chooses, either the 25 question test or the ten question test. There are a number of graphics which represent road signs and traffic situations included.

The Highway Code has received official approval from the Automobile Association for the Spectrum (48K) and Commodore versions, and all copies of the program will carry A. A. Approved stickers.


BACKPACKERS
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48K Spectrum
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Software by fantasy

The Sabre Wulf

AS WE PROMISED last month, here are the maps of those who received an 'Honourable Mention' in our Ultimate competition for the best looking *Sabre Wulf* Map.

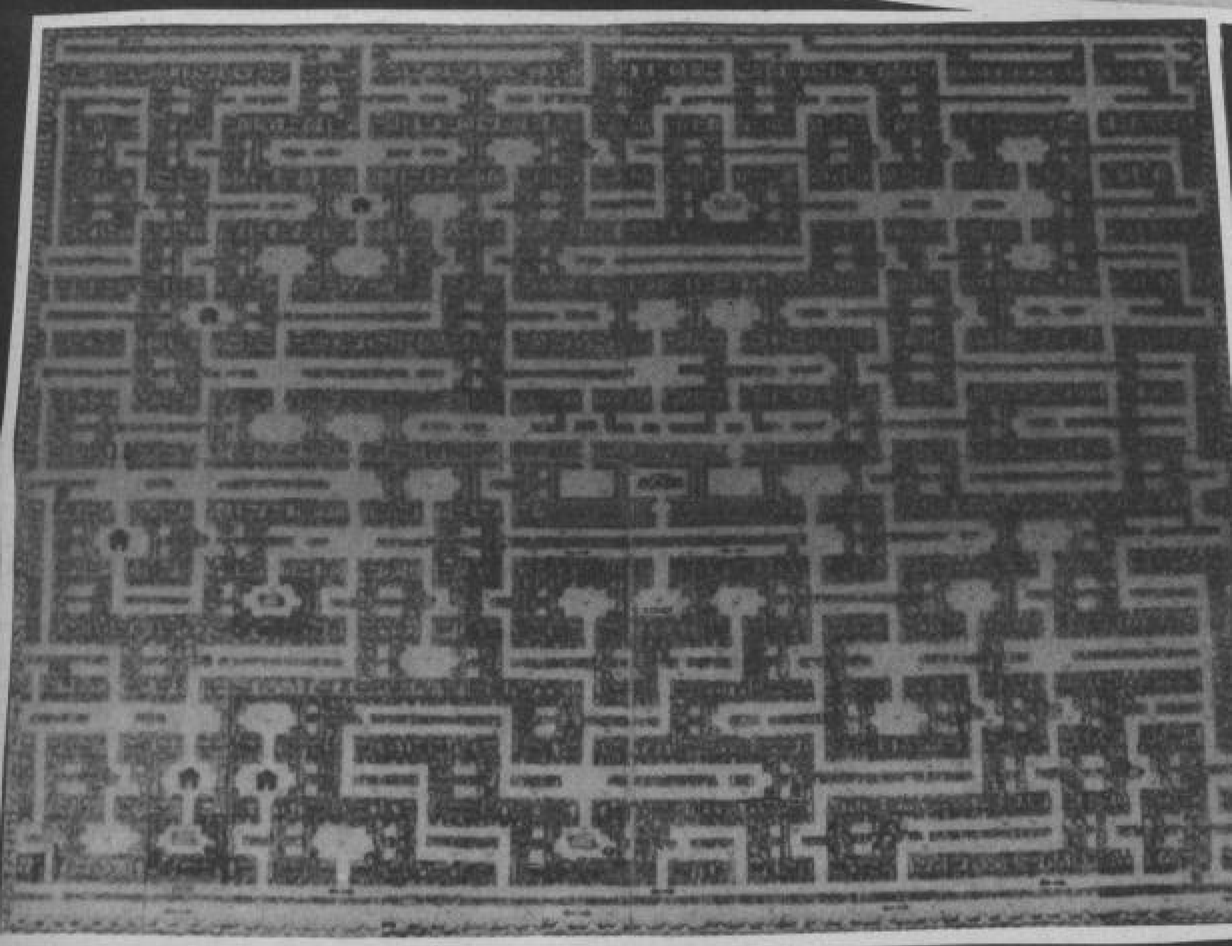
In the order they appeared in the last issue (not the order of merit), they are **Charles P. Cohen** of Totteridge, London N20, **Eammon Kenny** from Harlow, Essex, **Damon R.H. Butler** from Shipley, W. Yorkshire, **Andrew Sandham** from Trophins, Banchory, Kincardineshire, and **Glen McDowall** from Salisbury, Wiltshire, whose entry – The Wurlde's Smallest Sabre Wulf Map – appeared in last month's issue.

Once again, thank you to everyone who took part, and especially for all the time and trouble that virtually every entrant took over their maps and peripherals.

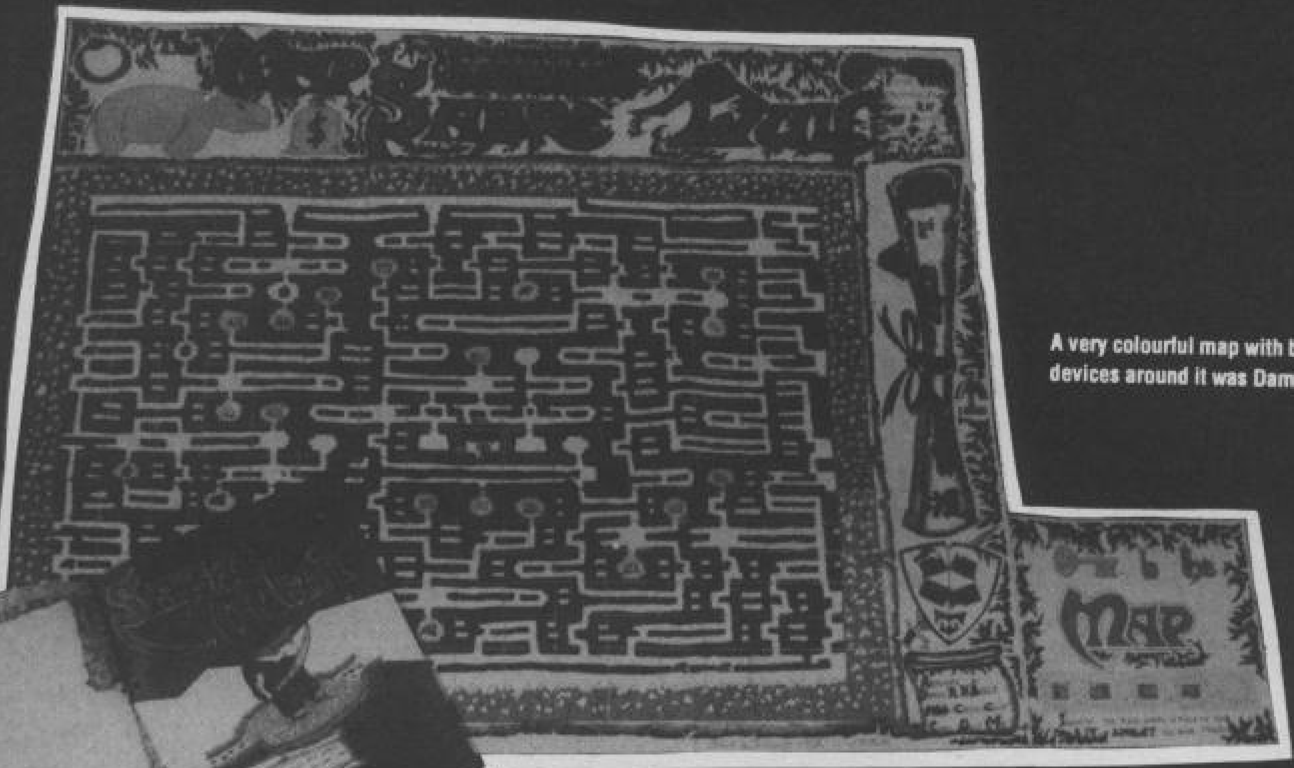
Honourable Mentions. . .

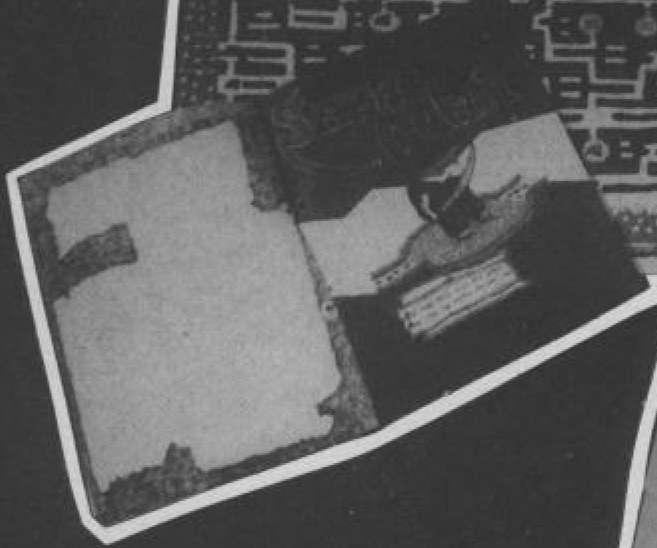


Eammon Kenny's entry came inside a splendidly surreal cover.

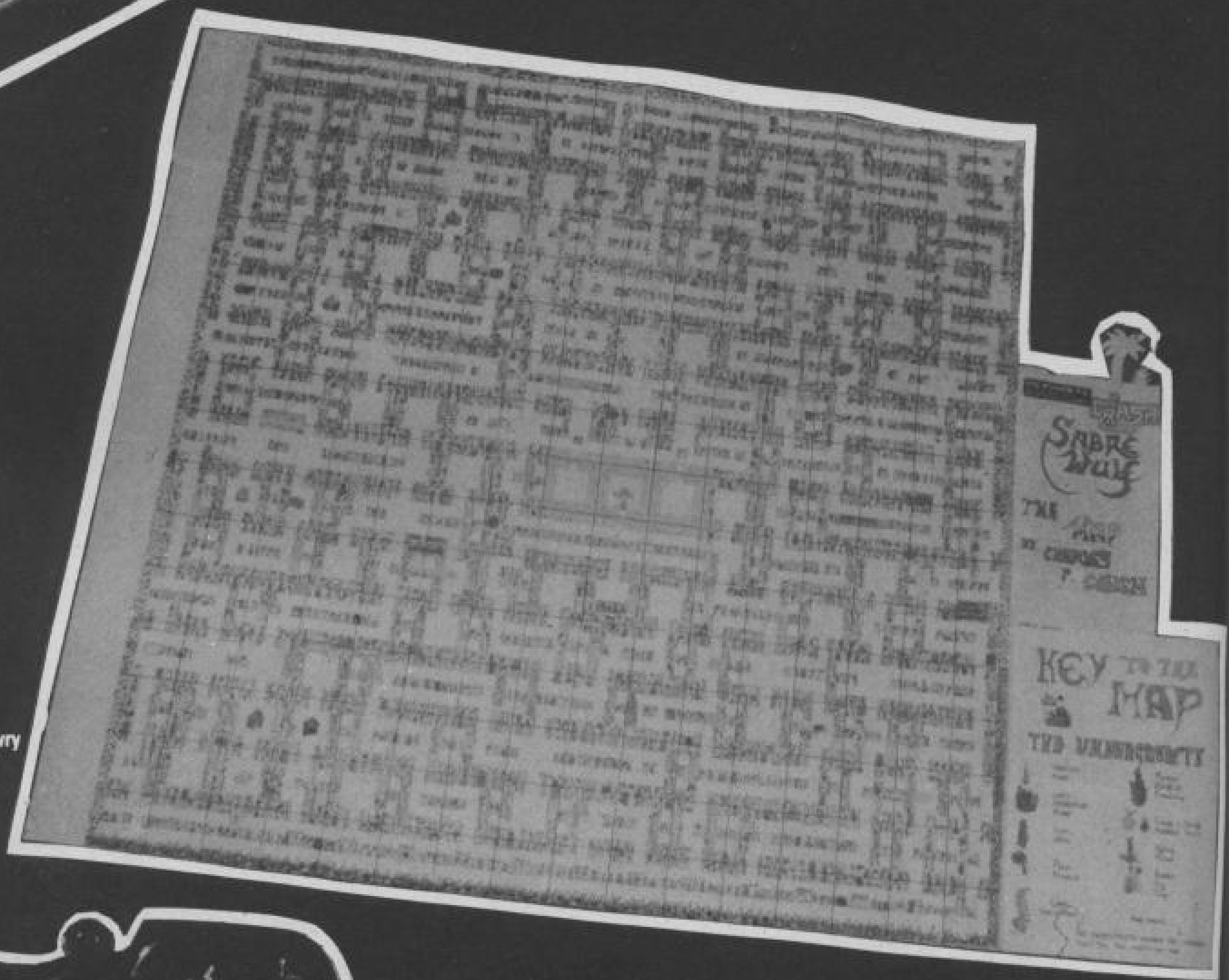


Perhaps Habitat would be interested in Andrew Sandham's detailed map which resembles a Victorian anitmacassar.





A very colourful map with beautifully drawn devices around it was Damon Butler's entry.



Right:
Charles Cohen's map also enclosed a wry description of the game in novel form.



SABRE WULF MAP COMPETITION

You'll never dream a program could be this good!!!



PYJAMARAMA

Join Wally in his nightmare

Sensational Software from

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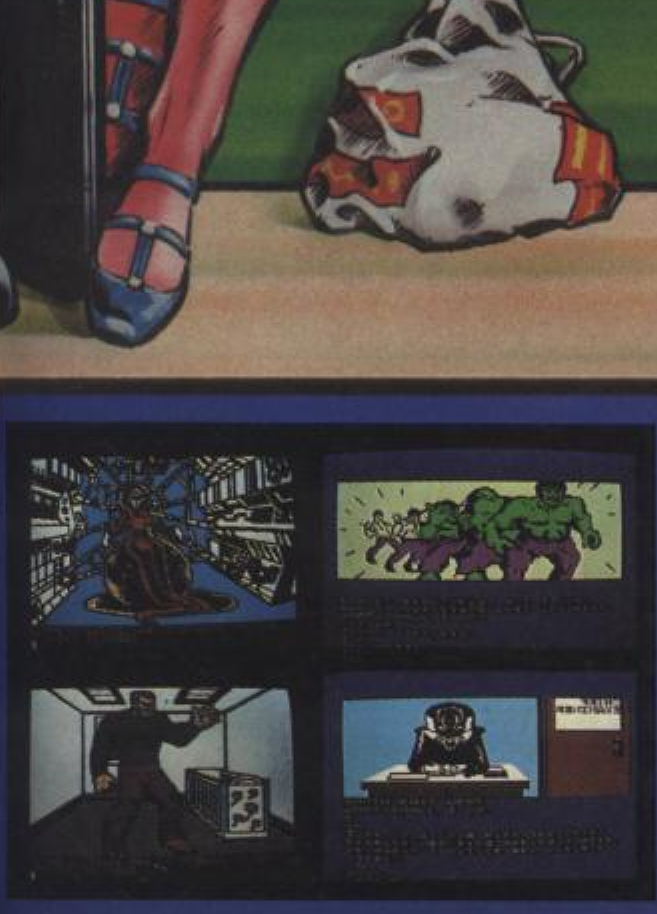
Scott Adams, is the most acclaimed adventure games writer in the world with an impressive string of internationally best-selling software titles behind him.

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fantasy SOFTWARE

The battle could be yours.....
.....but it won't be easy!



This is 'ZIGGY', shown above, in his exploratory capsule and is a true representation of the on-screen graphics.

THE PYRAMID

THE PYRAMID is an arcade style game which has a very adventurous feel to it.

The Pyramid contains 120 chambers on 15 levels. In order to get from one chamber to another you must fight off the indigenous aliens to collect an energised crystal which will neutralize the force field guarding the two exits.

The Pyramid is inhabited by a total of 60 weird and exotic alien types, all of which are beautifully animated. You will meet a whole variety of demons, droids, insects and monsters, with a sprinkling of the more unusual, the extra-terrestrial tweezers, galactic strawberry, cosmic claw, mutant eye, plus a whole host of entities that defy rational description. You'll no doubt invent your own nicknames.

You proceed to explore the pyramid from top to bottom with the difficulty generally increasing with the depth of level. Depending on the choice of exit from each chamber you are likely to have a different game every time you play.

Apart from the challenge of trying to achieve the highest score possible the pyramid contains a number puzzle to solve. The more chambers you successfully visit the more information is gathered to enable you to discover the secret numbers of the pyramid. The puzzle won't take you days to solve, it will probably take you a few months.

DOOMSDAY CASTLE

DOOMSDAY CASTLE consists of a labyrinth of 74 complexly interconnected Halls and Passages where you will meet a whole host of adversaries serving the infinitely evil Scarthax, the Garthrogs, the Orphacs, the phenomenally nasty Googly Bird and the Urks which manifest themselves in over fifty unbelievably weird and wonderful guises.

Scarthax has scoured the Universe to bring together the six ancient stones of lifeforce. United in Doomsday Castle they are being used to wield an irresistable power over the cosmos, emanating waves of corruption through every galaxy.

To save the Universe, you must battle your way through the Castle to find and collect the six stones and use their force against Scarthax to destroy Doomsday Castle, hopefully escaping yourself before the final cataclysmic explosion.

The task is not easy (saving the Universe never is!) and it will take you many games to unfold the structure of Doomsday Castle and discover the locations of the ancient stones.

The addictive arcade style action will keep you coming back to play but the overall challenge should still keep you occupied for months.

FANTASY SOFTWARE is available from W.H.SMITHS, JOHN MENZIES, BOOTS, LASKYS, GREENS, RUMBELOWS, SPECTRUM GROUP, COMPUTERS FOR ALL and all other good software retailers.

The Pyramid at £5.50 and Doomsday Castle at £6.50 from

FANTASY SOFTWARE, FALCONBERG LODGE, 27A ST GEORGES ROAD, CHELTENHAM, GLOS GL50 3DT
despatched by return first class post together with free membership and current newsletter of the Fantasy Micro Club.
Trade Enquiries welcome – telephone 0242-583661.

ROLL OVER SPECTRUM

FRANCO FREY

Converting a personal computer into a practical synthesizer usually requires a large amount of hardware - from musical keyboards to countless sound generators and filters. ROMANTIC ROBOT avoids this problem by converting the Spectrum into a music typewriter. The result is a respectable storage and retrieve type melody maker, not a realtime instrument. MUSIC TYPEWRITER stores up to 16 different music pieces within 254 bars, which can be edited and played with varying rhythm and tempo.

THE INSTRUMENTS

MUSIC TYPEWRITER comes complete with a manual and a keyboard overlay in a library box. The program lets you set paper and ink colours and then presents itself with the *main menu*. MUSIC TYPEWRITER is organised in three program pages. For each page a help menu may be called up for on screen instructions.
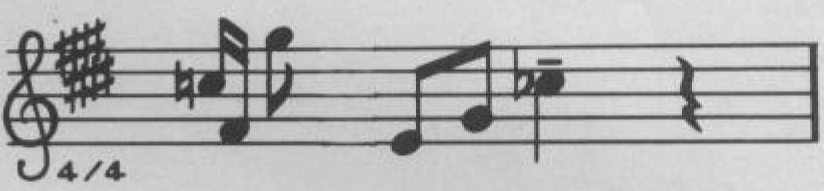
Page 0 contains the *main menu*, which also gives access to the other pages.

Page 1 provides a selection of the key and time signatures, tempo, clef and tail display of the music to be written.

Page 2 contains the catalogue of existing music pieces and provides the controls for creating, deleting, saving and loading of other music hors d'oevres. Throughout the program, SPACE moves the selecting cursor, ENTER executes the selected command or value, Q quits any operation and returns you to the *main menu* and BREAK reinitialises the program to the original colour selection.

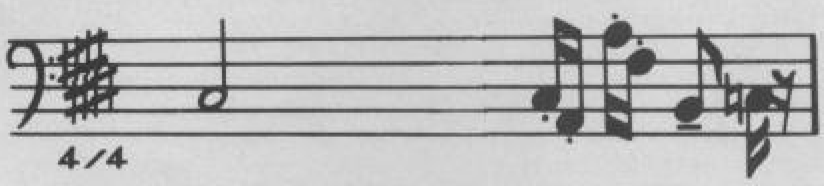
The first excursion should lead to page 2, where the catalogue of existing music pieces will be displayed with their index number, name, number of bars and how many bars are still available. The piece to be written, edited or played is selected with NEW (for a new piece) or OLD (for an existing piece). Q brings back the main menu.

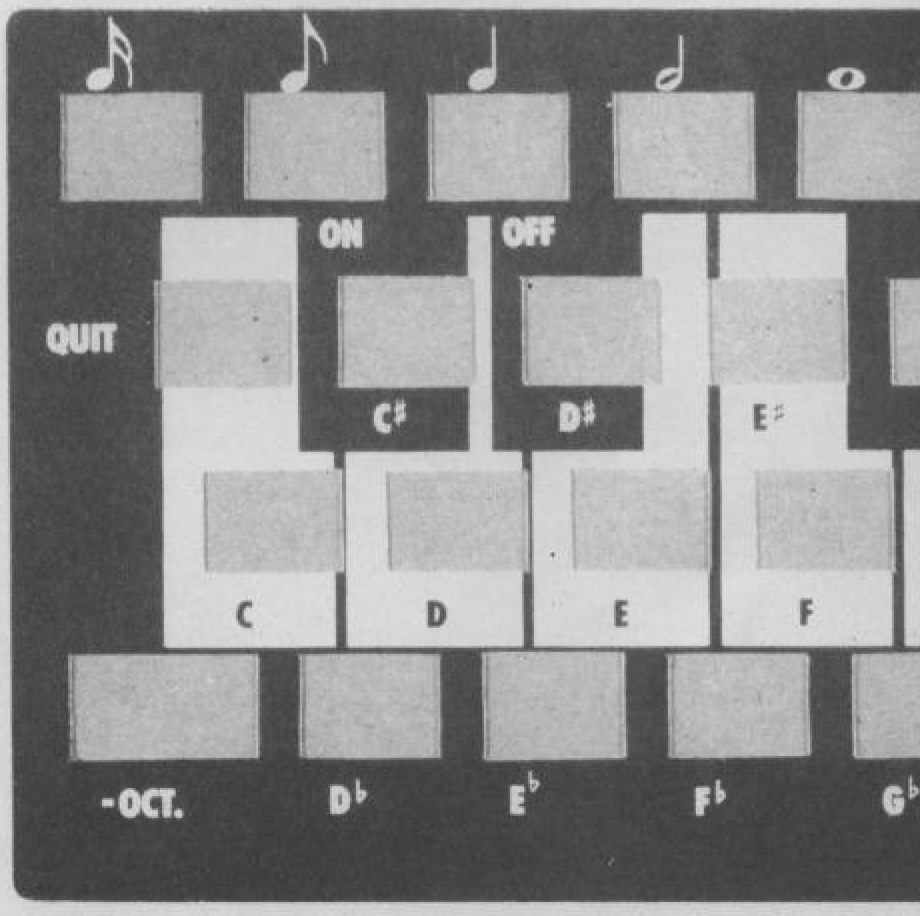
The second excursion should lead to page 1, where all the key and time parameters will have to be set up for the piece to be written, unless one operates with the default values. All the major keys are available at the touch of their key. Existing music pieces will be transposed taking care of all sharps, flats etc. Any time signature may be selected from 2/4 to 8/4 or 2/8 to 15/8. Tempo can be set anywhere between 23 and 255 of the metronome scale. Treble and bass clefs and tail direction are selected for the correct notation. Pressing Q returns you to the main menu where write mode may be selected. The music is written directly on the Spectrum keyboard. The overlay converts the Spectrum into a musical keyboard with the 3rd row from the top as white keys. The black keys, which can either be sharps or flats depending on notation can be accessed either on the 2nd row from the top (sharps) or the 4th row from the top (flats). There is just over 1 octave available at any time, but the whole range can be shifted an octave lower with caps shift & 2 or an octave higher with symbol shift & 2. The shift can be cancelled by pressing caps or symbol shift & 3. There are two clefs, the bass clef using the lower and the treble clef the upper part of the full 6 octave range. The basic note values are selected on the top row and range from a semibreve to a semiquaver (additional signs such as staccato, tenuto, dotted notes, triplets can also be selected) and apply until a new value is selected. The selected value is displayed in the top left corner of the screen. Pressing any of the music keys or PAUSE will play the note and display it simultaneously in the bar following the last entered note. Caps shift & 0 deletes the notes from right to left starting with the last written note. STEP steps you through existing
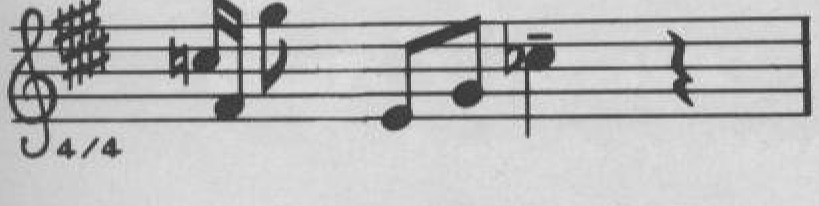


MUSIC TYPEWRITER

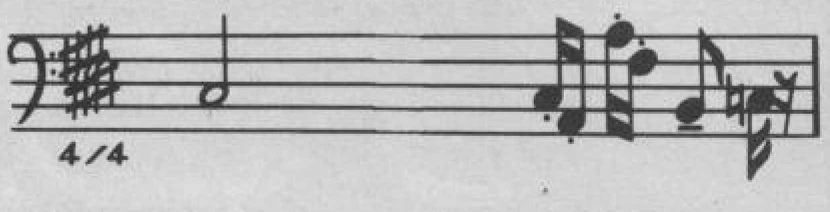
Alright, your Sinclair Spectrum is not noted to be a very good musician - how would you sound with a tiny piezo ceramic mouthpiece - but it has got an excellent memory for tunes and a finger dexterity second to none. So why not tap in on these resources and extend your musical repertoire with the speccy...

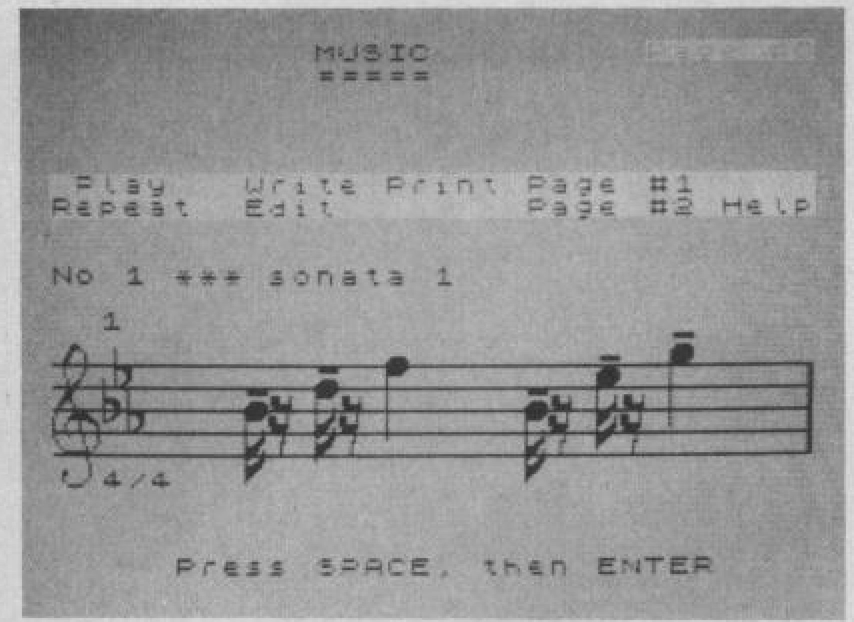






MUSIC TYPEWRITER





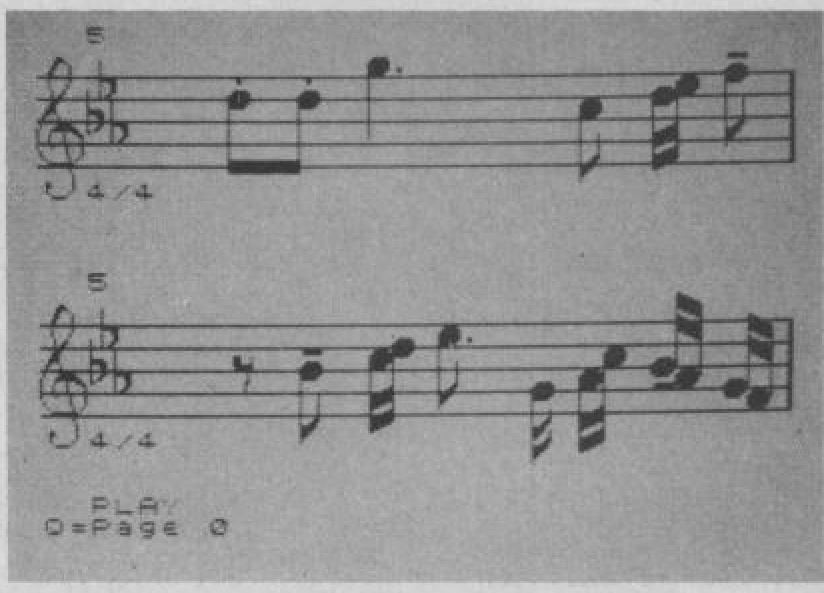
notes from left to right without altering them. The program takes care of the bar lines and end line. Upon completion of the music piece the write mode is left by pressing ENTER upon completion of the last bar.

The tune may now be played by selecting PLAY from main menu, and the music parameters may be changed and experimented with. REPEAT repeats a piece N times. The range is from 1 to 255 with 255 being an endless loop.

If only certain bars of a music piece need to be altered EDIT will enable you to step through and change notes in a bar number N and onwards.

CRITICISM

MUSIC TYPEWRITER is an extremely user friendly program, which lets you get started within minutes. As the music has to be written in real notation, it is not suited for musicians who play by ear. You cannot play a melody with varying note values just by modulating the keys, so creating a rhythmical sequence will have to be worked out in the mind. MUSIC TYPEWRITER has tremendous potential as an educational program for young kids who have to come to grips with writing or reading a musical piece and have to learn the scales. Disappointingly there is only one 'instrument' available. It would have been nice to have a range of instruments to choose from. After all, it's the one thing you expect from an electronic instrument. This together with the limitation of one voice only limits the pleasure of using MUSIC TYPEWRITER for anything more serious. One other drawback is the way in which the notes are displayed in playback and write/edit mode. The notes appear simultaneously when they are played or entered, but there is no forward vision. It is impossible to read (or learn to read)

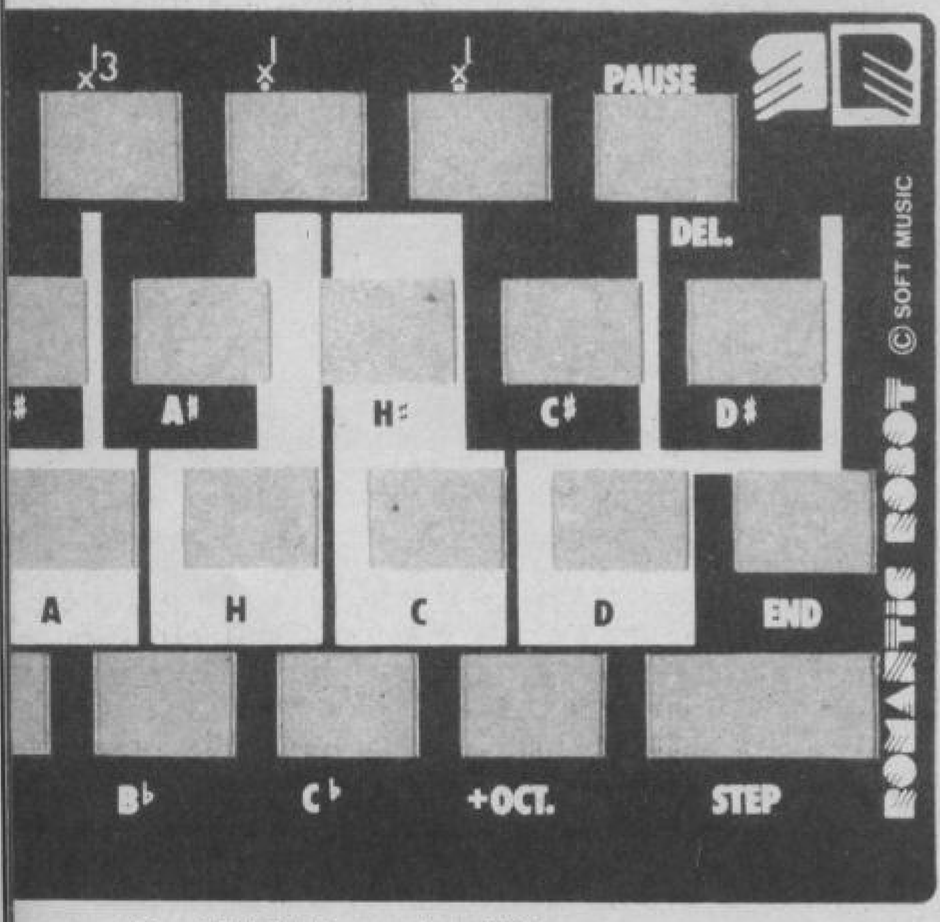


the notes on playback, as the preceding notes are invisible. It would have been far better to indicate the current play position by a change of ink colour using a less solid colour for the notes still to be played. The same goes for editing or writing an old piece, where you would like to do alterations by stepping with SPACE to copy the existing notes and to overwrite a certain section with new notes. As you are not aware of the next note you end up pressing STEP (SPACE) followed by DEL. (CAP SHIFT & 0) because of the blindness.

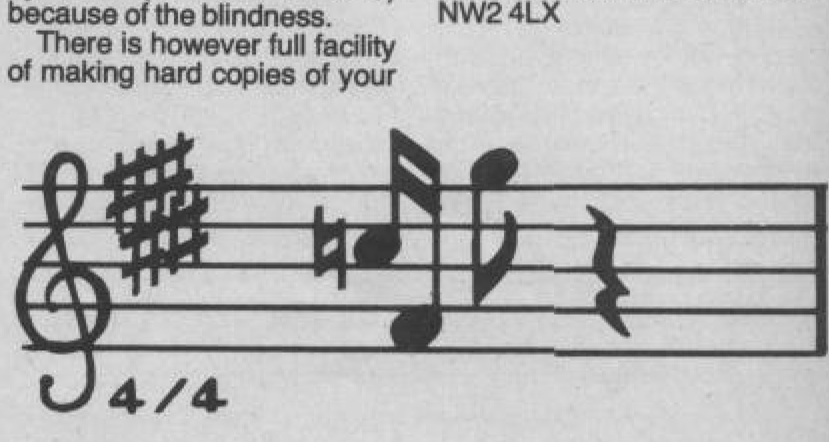
There is however full facility of making hard copies of your master pieces with a print command in the WRITE/EDIT mode for the current bar and in the main menu for an entire music piece. The music piece can be saved and loaded from tape by accessing page 2.

The keyboard overlay solves the problem of not having a dedicated musical keyboard and all the major commands are annotated for instant accessibility. There are a string of error reports which warn you of impending dangers and together with the HELP pages this makes for a very user friendly program.

Apart from any serious educational application MUSIC TYPEWRITER is an ideal passtime for any lingering musicist. You can write the most masochist tune and see how the computer copes without any hiccups. . .



Program: MUSIC TYPEWRITER
Producer:Romantic Robot
Memory required:16K
Retail Price:£9.95
Author: B. Mikolasek & V. Meier
Address:Romantic Robot, 113 Melrose Avenue, London NW2 4LX




fantasy
Backpacking this year : . .
fantasy SOFTWARE
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For 48K Spectrum
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For 48K Spectrum
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BEAKY and the Egg Snatchers
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GUIDE TO THE UNIVERSE PART 1
Not just a game...
... more a way of life
48K Spectrum
Software by fantasy
. . . don't leave home without us
*The Pyramid, Beaky and the Eggsnatchers available on CBM 64

The ultimate development from agf



Designed exclusively for the ZX Spectrum, Protocol 4 brings you game control customising in a way that no other interface does. It can accept all commercially standard joysticks, including the Quickshot II with 'rapid fire' or Trackball controllers, and is compatible with ALL Spectrum software. **OPERATES LIKE FIXED OPTION INTERFACES OR CAN BE FULLY HARDWARE PROGRAMMED**

The flexibility of Protocol 4 control is achieved by a specially designed 'CustomCard' system. CustomCards are easily programmed to suit all types of games.

Simply clip in a programmed card for immediate customised control. With preset cards supplied Protocol 4 can emulate the following control standards: AGF/Protek, Kempston and ZX Interface 2 — both players. You can change or reprogram blank cards (1 supplied) to get the responses you want — even on games without joystick options.

Utilising Hardware Programmed technology you have the benefit of automatic eight direction control, no power-down programming loss, guaranteed conflict-free operation with other peripherals, including microdrives, and no extra software to load or awkward joystick movements and key presses to make each time you load another game. The keyboard remains fully operative at all times.

It is also perfectly possible to connect up to five Protocol 4's on one Spectrum, each programmed separately, for multiple player control — only possible with the hardware programmed design.

Incorporated into the design is a computer Reset button for clearing the computer memory between games without pulling the power plug out.

Fully guaranteed for 18 months, Protocol 4 comes supplied with five CustomCards, ten Quick Reference Programming Cards and complete instructions.



PROGRAMMABLE INTERFACE

As the first fully hardware programmed joystick interface, this product has become well established over the past year and will accept ALL standard joysticks or trackballs, including Quickshot II with 'rapid fire', for use with ALL Spectrum or ZX81 software — not just those with a joystick option.

* No Software programming required.
* Programming is *not* lost when power is disconnected between games.
* Eight way movement — with or without the fire button pressed — only requires setting of the four normal directions.
* Compatibility is guaranteed with ALL key reading techniques — machine code or BASIC.
* Several interfaces can be separately programmed and fitted to one computer for multiple player games.

Keyboard operation is totally unaffected by this interface, as with all AGF add-ons, and will never conflict with *any* other device fitted at the same time.

Twelve months guarantee, key programming information and a pack of Quick Reference Cards, to speed up setting of the clips, are supplied with full instructions.

INTERFACE II

The AGF Interface II represents the best low cost introduction to joystick control.

The 'AGF' control standard is now offered by over 100 games or utility programs for use with any joystick or trackball.

Any game which is controlled by the cursor movement keys (5,6,7,8) or has a Protek option is also compatible with Interface II.

A rear connector allows other peripherals to be connected at the same time.

This product is available for either the Spectrum or ZX81, is supplied with full instructions, a 12 month guarantee, and a 12½% discount voucher against further AGF mail-order purchases.

ROMSLOT

The new AGF RomSlot is designed for anyone who already owns a programmable joystick interface, or prefers to use the keyboard to control games, and would like to add the facility of ROM cartridge software to their system.

RomSlot will accept the Sinclair range of instant loading games and will also be compatible with the new releases from Parker Software — exciting new games only to be available in ROM format.

This system allows instant play. Your computer memory size is not important and you will be able to play games that could ordinarily require more RAM.

RomSlot incorporates an extra feature called 'Restart'. This allows you to instantly *restart* the ROM game.

RomSlot is guaranteed for 12 months and has a full width expansion connector to accept joystick interfaces, speech units and printers etc.

QUICKSHOT

The Quickshot joystick is an excellent value game controller incorporating suction cups for sure-footed precision with a comfortably contoured handle offering a convenient top firing button as well as one on the base.

QUICKSHOT II

Quickshot II has improved styling with a trigger type firing button as well as the top firing action, with a broader base for greater suction stability.

It also has a unique 'Auto-Fire' facility which at the flick of a switch provides a constant rapid firing action simulating a fast trigger finger.

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AGF Programmable Interface	£24.95+£1.00 p&p	☐
AGF RomSlot	£ 9.95+£0.50 p&p	☐
AGF Interface II	£ 9.95+£0.50 p&p	☐
Quickshot II Joystick	£10.50+£0.50 p&p	☐
Quickshot Joystick	£ 7.95+£0.50 p&p	☐
Extra 'CustomCards' (5 per pack	£ 3.95 inc. p&p	☐
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Send to: AGF Hardware, Dept , Freepost, Bognor Regis, West Sussex, PO22 9BY.

Trade Enquiries ring (0243) 823337

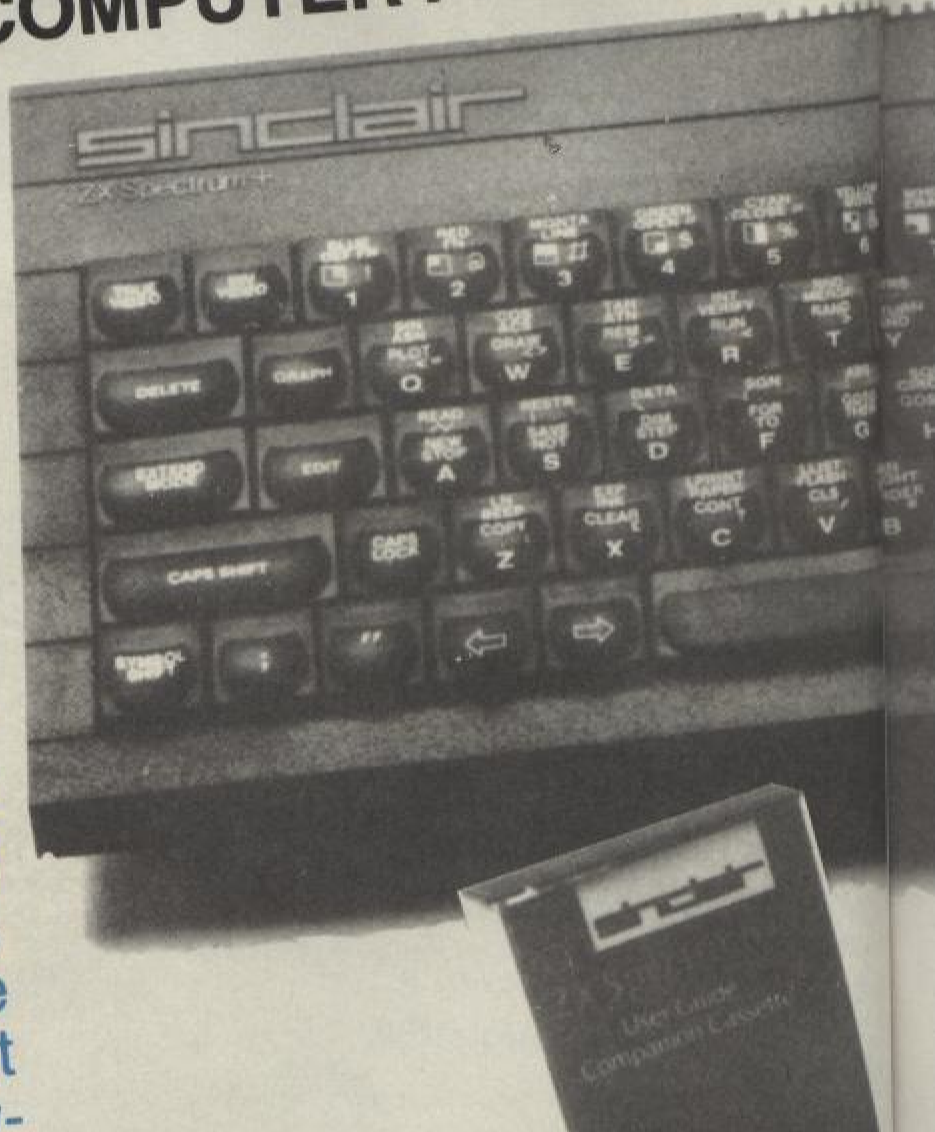
There's nowhere else to go

agf

As you will all know by now, Sinclair Research have just released the new ZX SPECTRUM , which costs £179.99. The new machine is really very similar to the ordinary Spectrum except that it has been placed inside a chopped QL body and therefore has pro- fessional typewriter keys. For the games player there are two other notable alt- erations. The cursor keys have been placed on the bottom row and rearranged so that the left/right keys are one side of the SPACE bar and the up/down are on the other - a more logical and ergonomic arrangement. The second is that the SPECTRUM has two feet at the back, which besides giv- ing a better operating attitude, also makes the sound louder. There are extra keys too, which means that some prog- ramming operations are made much easier — Extended mode, for instance, is now obtained in a single key press from its own key. This means the new machine has 58 keys including the space bar.

The new machine can still use software and peripher- als designed for the ordi- nary Spectrum.

ONE LUCKY PERSON WIL COMPUTER FROM SINCLAI

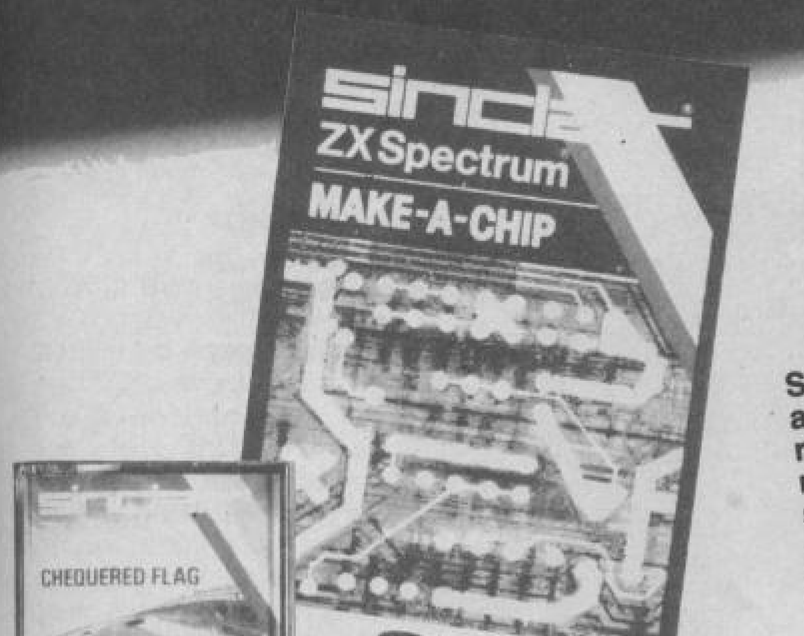


Crash Competition

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ILL WIN THIS NEW
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TRUM + !!

In association with SINCLAIR RESEARCH we are offering one CRASH reader the chance to win a new SPECTRUM and the software that goes with it!

SPECTRUM COMPETITION

All you have to do is answer these questions below, write the answers down on a postcard (or the outside of a sealed envelope) and send it in to: **SPECTRUM COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive by first post **December 7**. The first correct entry drawn from the bag will receive the **SPECTRUM , full colour user's manual and the six games pack which includes Tasword 2, Scrabble, Chess, VU-3D, Make a Chip and Chequered Flag.**

THE QUESTIONS

1. Name five microcomputers which have been produced by Sinclair. 2. Name the four ZX peripherals for the Spectrum that have been produced to date. 3. Name six games (not utilities) released by or under the Sinclair name other than those mentioned above.

BATTLE FIELD JOYSTICK barely having gone to press in last months issue, we received by post the SURESHOT from Cookbridge Computer Supplies. Given the fact that we are still waiting anxiously for some of the manufacturers to send us requested review joysticks (some manufacturers don't try to sell their products, they would rather hang them above the mantelpiece) we felt quite bad about neglecting this one, as it is a truly British product and initial trials proved to be quite exciting. Who knows, we may yet get a flood of unheard of or unknown joysticks after this article. . .

BIG BORE SHOOTER

CONSTRUCTION

The unit doesn't look as glamorous as a QUICKSHOT 2, but a quick glance at the details reveals a sturdy arcade style joystick. The enclosure is a robust rectangular black ABS moulding with rounded edges and a grain finish. On the inside there is a tough steel plate which acts as a chassis. A bronze bush with two thrust washers guides the strong steel shaft and a shaft-mounted compression spring held in place by the nylon microswitch actuator bush and a circlip creates the self-centering force. On the steel plate are mounted 4 industry standard V3 microswitches, which are directly activated by the nylon bush. The end travel stop is poorly designed, as the microswitch bodies act as stops. There are 2 large round fire buttons at 11o'clock and 1o'clock which activate over a common nylon moulded lever a fifth microswitch also mounted on the internal steel plate. The cable incorporates a moulded D type connector (with Atari compatible pinout) at one end and a sleeved retaining grommet at the other. The wires are soldered to the microswitch contacts.

IN ACTION

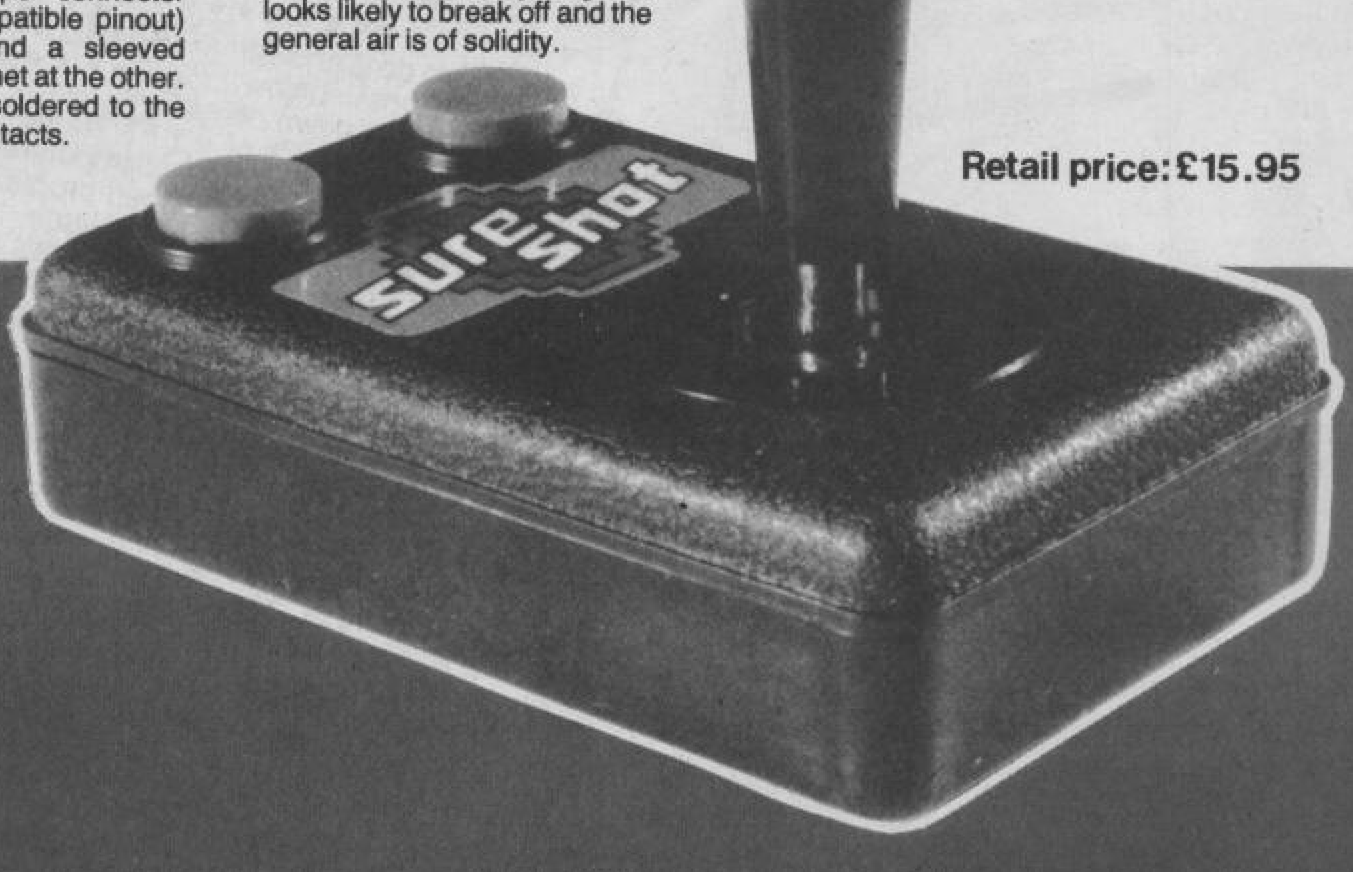
The stick action has a medium to long travel and requires a fairly light activating force. The reaction speed is average, as there is a considerable amount of dead travel in the centre, but the response is good with a good audible feedback. The dead travel does not help when playing dicey maze games which require tricky inching techniques. The fire action requires a fair amount of force with a short travel and a good clicking feedback. Intermittent firing is not helped by a large switch hysteresis caused by the microswitch. Left and right handers are catered for. Although the shape of the enclosure is very simple, the joystick is ideal for handheld use with the thumb coming to rest exactly on one of the fire buttons. The four rubber feet provide a stable support for table top operation, which together with the light action stick guarantees rock steady use. SURESHOT withstood the Crypton factor test (15 minutes of Ocean's Daley Thompson's Decathlon) with ease. There isn't anything that looks likely to break off and the general air is of solidity.

CONCLUSION

For anybody who lets off steam from the pressures of school or office this stick should prove to be a challenge. Because of the long dead travel and the hysteresis of the fire buttons this stick is not choice number one for fiddly games. Nonetheless SURESHOT has proven to be very popular with all of CRASH reviewers for its sensible design. The company's experience with arcade machines has obviously paid off. . .

Product:SURESHOT
Supplier:Cookbridge Computer Supplies, P. O. Box IW9, Leeds LS16 6NT

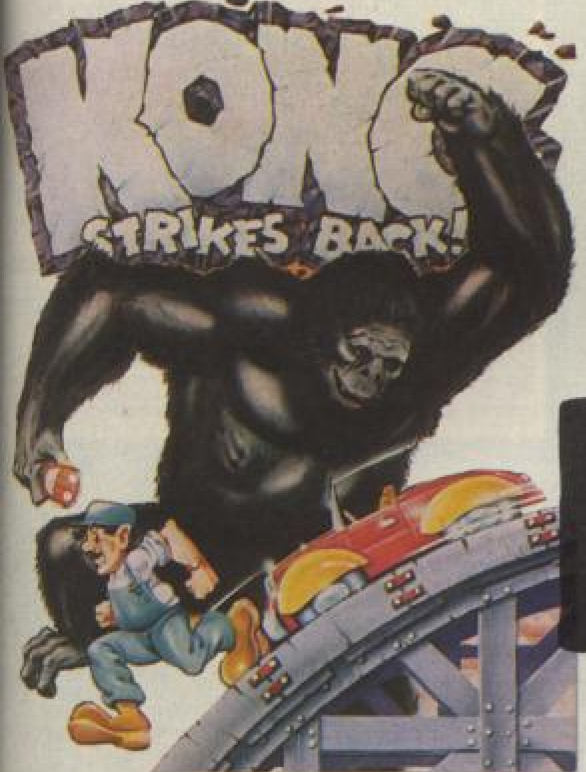
Retail price: £15.95



the good

Yeh, only the good will survive in this the Superstar's,(that's me), first supa-game. . . **"Roland's Rat Race".** Yeh, I'll really need your help, Rat Fans, to wind my way through the underground Rodent World of ladders, lifts, bats and all kinds of creepy crawlies, where I must find the keys to free my furry friends. I can't wait to use my glue gun . . . "Stick 'em down!" . . . on those monster meanies. See you on your screen, from your cuddly, adorable me.
. . . Roland Rat, Superstar.





the BAD

The fun of the fair and the fury of Kong! Now you can know what it feels like to be a dodgem, only this time you're running up and down the Roller Coaster dodging the cars, giant buns and jumping springs. But the fun has only just begun!...wait until the fury starts! The wacky Waltzer and the zany Swinging Gym are enough to unhinge the sanest fun fair fanatic. **Kong Strikes Back** is all good fun but it's bound to bring out the bad in you!



and the Ugly!



Ugh! The Hunch is back! Your favourite bell ringer, the all-conquering Quasimodo, swings into action on another breathtaking, action- packed extravaganza. Set the bells sounding and Esmerelda's heart pounding with Quasi's astounding derring dos and athletic antics. The bats in the belfry may send you bonkers but be as bold as brass, give yourself a pat on the hump and, WATCH THAT FIREBALL! . . . phew! . . . Our hero's revenge is a winner all the way, yes, it's definitely for you . . hoo!

Three great games of real character from

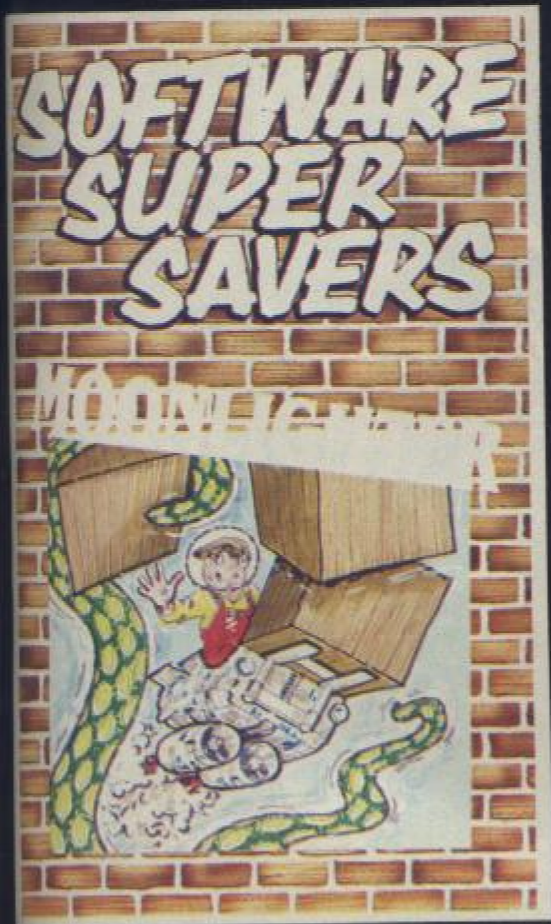
SPECTRUM 48k
6.90

ocean

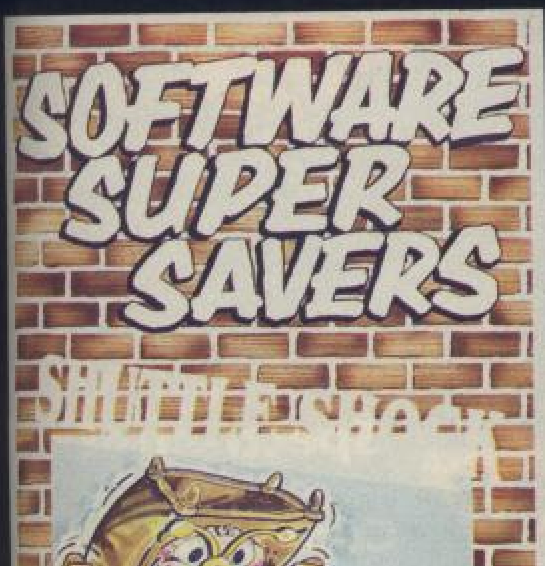
COMMODORE 64
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Ocean Software is available from selected branches of: **WOOLWORTH**, WHSMITH, Boots, John Menzies, **LASKYS**, **Rumbelows** and Spectrum Shops Spectrum Shops and all good software dealers. Trade enquiries welcome.



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Algernon the astronaut has crash-landed on the planet Epsilon XI and the power packs that propel his rocket have been dispersed around the planet. Algies efforts to re-assemble his power packs are hindered by some rather eccentric life forms; stinkers, mutant lawn mowers, grandfather clocks?? What kind of planet is this?
Available on the 48K Spectrum.

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fantasy

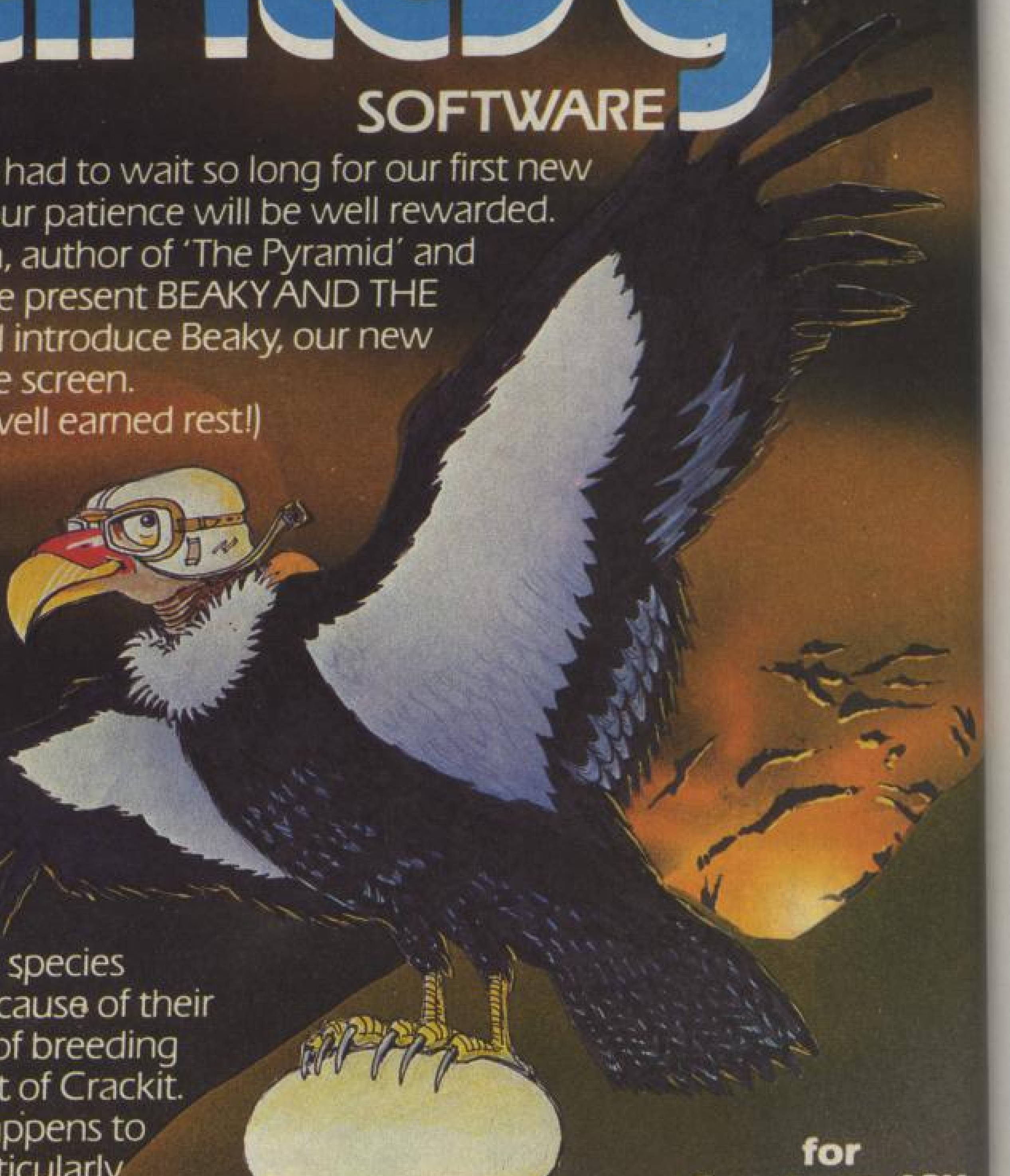
SOFTWARE

We're sorry you've had to wait so long for our first new release of 1984 but your patience will be well rewarded.

From Bob Hamilton, author of 'The Pyramid' and 'Doomsday Castle' we present BEAKY AND THE EGGSNATCHERS and introduce Beaky, our new star of the video-game screen.

(Ziggy is having a well earned rest!)

Beaky belongs to the family of Andromedan Armed Condors, the rare goggled variety.



The numbers of his species are dwindling fast because of their rather foolish choice of breeding ground, on the planet of Crackit. This unfortunately happens to be the home of a particularly evil band of creatures known collectively as the Eggsnatchers. Their sole malicious intent in life is to extinctify Beaky's species by stealing or destroying the eggs by any foul means available.

BEAKY and the Egg Snatchers

for Spectrum 48K and Commodore 64

Your objective is to try and brood, hatch out and rear as many little Beakys as possible through 12 different screens of formidable but delightful arcade action.

FANTASY SOFTWARE is available from W.H.SMITHS, JOHN MENZIES, BOOTS, WOOLWORTHS, LASKYS, GREENS, RUMBELLOWS, SPECTRUM GROUP and all other good software retailers.

Beaky and the Eggsnatchers is available for 48K Spectrum and Commodore 64 at £6.50 on cassette or on disk for the Commodore 64 at £9.50 from

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Trade Enquiries welcome – telephone 0242-583661.

ULTRAKIT

ULTRAKIT is not the name of a new pop group, but a new utility for the Spectrum. Coming from the very much famed company HISOFT (producers of DEVPAC and PASCAL), ULTRAKIT is a boost for the Sinclair Basic and provides the user with a more sophisticated and comprehensive Basic. It provides User Defined Keys, error trapping, an alarm clock, program trace and many other extra features.

ULTRAKIT

ULTRAKIT is less than 7K and sits just under the User Defined Graphics area. It can be loaded at any time before or after program development as a machine code block (a Basic loader program is provided if required) and can initially be activated with a Randomise User command. ULTRAKIT uses two types of command. One type is the Pre Defined Command (PDC). These commands are obtained by holding ENTER and pressing one of the digit keys, releasing ENTER (the message will appear) and only then releasing the digit key. This may sound difficult, but it soon becomes second nature. The other type is termed a Kit command. These are accessed using REM in immediate mode. This produces the HISOFT copyright message and the command can be typed in letter by letter. The command may be abbreviated to one letter - U for Update etc.). The execution follows after pressing ENTER.

There are 11 Pre Defined commands and 23 Kit commands.

THE CLOCK

The clock is interrupt driven and will therefore work whenever the interrupt is not disabled (Microdrive, cassette handling and Lprint disable interrupts and therefore stop the clock operation momentarily). The clock time display can be turned on and off by ENTER8 and can be updated or set by use of the Kit command UPDATE.

The alarm time can also be turned on and off by ENTER9 and can be set by the Kit command WARNTIME. The alarm will run for one minute and the alarm can be switched off by ENTER0. AL in the display indicates that the alarm is set. Obviously the clock will run even if the display is switched off.

USER DEFINED KEYS

The ten digit keys may be defined by the user to produce any string required (up to a maximum of 256 characters per key) when accessed. A vertical line at the end of the string is an implied ENTER command and will lead to the immediate execution of the string on call up of that digit number (SPACEdigit). Strings without implied ENTER will appear in the edit line on call up and can thus be used for calling up often used Kit commands with SPACEdigit. Pressing ENTER will execute these. This means that multi-statement commands may be immediately executed via the User Defined Keys. Kit commands can only be called up on the edit line, but cannot be executed directly (ENTER required). Setting up and editing the User Defined Keys is accomplished with a Kit command KEY followed by the string. The multi-statement strings allow the user to save with ULTRAKIT information either as DATA statements or as user defined functions and quickly retrieve and use after ULTRAKIT is activated again. User Defined Graphics may be saved this way and can be redefined with the press of a (user defined) key.

PROGRAM TRACING

TRACE is activated by the Kit command TRACE and requires 3 parameters, the trace-on line, the trace-off line and the initial speed of tracing (0 to 6 and > 127 for single stepping). This enables only certain program sections of interest to run under trace. On a GOTO or RUN in the edit line followed by ENTER the program will be executed one statement at a time at a reduced speed and the current line and statement will be printed inverse in the top right screen. The execution speed may be changed by pressing one of the digit keys 1 to 6 and 0 (1 full speed, 0 1.5 second delay) or by pressing Symbol Shift to enter the single step mode. In single step mode the current variables may be monitored (V), the current line (L) or next line (N) may be listed, or the screen cleared (C). Pressing SYMBOL SHIFT executes the next statement, pressing one of the digit keys returns to normal trace. Trace mode inactivates the toolkit and on completion toolkit has to be reactivated with SYMBOL SHIFT and SPACE. Microdrive commands inactivate TRACE.

FIND AND SUBSTITUTE

These two Kit commands can be used to search for and replace occurences of strings.

The FIND string and the SUBSTITUTE string can be put into the respective buffers by the use of the PUT Kit command.

The search can be started at a specified line number N. It will displace the line in which it occurs and pinpoint with a flashing cursor the exact position of the string.

A minus sign in front of the start search line number will cause a search through the whole program starting with the start line and will list all occurences in the form line:statement. SUBSTITUTE operates in a similar fashion, but will either substitute and display the line in which it occurs or with a minus sign replace all occurences automatically.

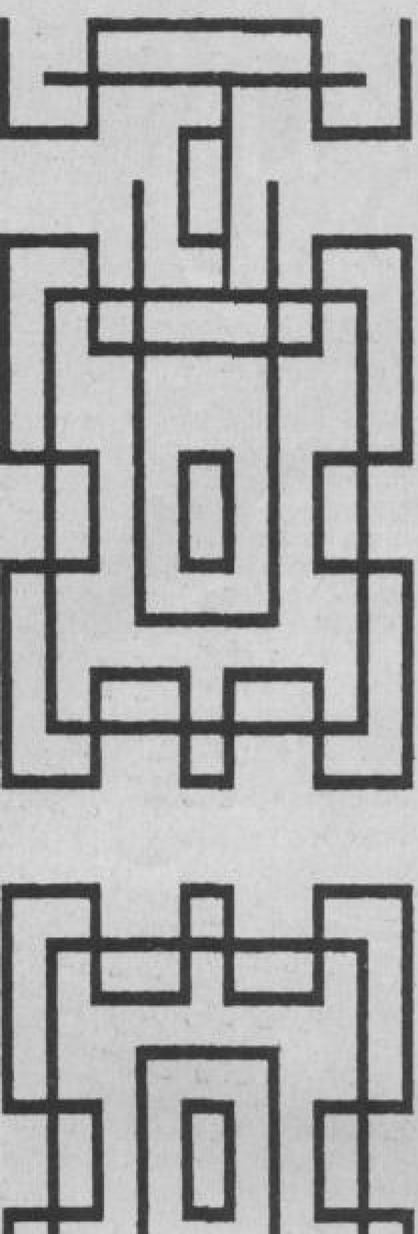
SUBSTITUTE may be used to substitute a variable for an explicit number which appears frequentl in the program. With inclusion of a statement Let val=n at the beginning of a program.

PROGRAM COMPACTION ROUTINES

Among the Pre Defined commands there are 4 program compaction routines, which will reduce the amount of programming space required at the cost of making the program totally unintelligible. CRUNCH1 will convert all numbers to a dummy 0 (ASCII representation of the number set to 0). The real value is unrecoverable.

CRUNCH2 converts 0 to PI, 1 to SGN PI, 3 to INT PI, and all other numbers to their VAL equivalent. The program will however run slower.

ULTRAKIT



PACKER will compress the program into as few statements as possible (127 statements per line as a maximum), avoiding however taging lines onto a preceding line including REM, STOP, IF, GOTO, RUN or RETURN. To compress your program into a minimum possible space, REMKILL followed by a ReNUMBER, then PACKER and finally one of the CRUNCHes will do the trick. This should only be done after the program has been fully debugged and saved in its normal expansive form.

INTERESTING FEATURES

Other interesting Pre Defined commands are MAP which displays a memory map of the Spectrum and L-CASE and U-CASE which convert all variables to lower or upper case.

The following Kit commands are also available: BREAK can be set to break program execution and resume at a given line number.

COPY copies a block of lines indicated by start and end of block line number to a destination line number. These lines will be renumbered in 1's starting from destination1. Only the line numbers will be renumbered and not GOTO's etc. These must be changed by hand.

DELETE deletes a block of lines.

EDIT will bring down a specific line for editing.

GRAB deletes part of the toolkit to gain programming space. There are three levels.

HIDE inactivates temporarily the toolkit and increases the execution speed.

INFORM displays the current default values for the command parameters.

JOIN joins two program lines if the number of statements does not exceed 127.

LOSE—KIT inactivates the toolkit permanently.

MOVE copies similar to COPY but then deletes the original block.

NUMBER renumbers the program from a start line to the end with a chosen start line and increment. All GOTO, GOSUB, LIST, LLIST, RESTORE, RUN and LINE statements are adjusted accordingly and a report is given on all lines containing these expressions.

ON—ERROR equivalent to BREAK, except that all errors are trapped with the exception of 0:OK, 9:STOP STATEMENT, 14:BREAK CONT repeats, and 21:BREAK INTO PROGRAM.

QSEPARATOR specifies the character used to separate the two parameter strings.

RAMREL will change RAMTOP without CLEARing variables. The parameter is a relative move from existing RAMTOP.

REMKILL deletes all REM statements, control codes and unnecessary spaces. Machine code routines within REM statements may be protected by placing an asterisk as the first REM character.

CONCLUSION

HISOFT are providing with ULTRAKIT a professional tool without any unnecessary frills. The most powerful facilities are the TRACE, ON—ERROR, MAP, USER DEFINED KEYS, FIND/SUBSTITUTE and the compaction routines.

All the other Basic extensions such as ReNUMBER, JOIN, MOVE, COPY and DELETE complement this package.

The two command modes Kit and Pre Defined are easy to get used to and provide a very fast and efficient way of accessing all the available facilities.

Some trouble was experienced with the single step TRACE mode, as it appeared to skip several statements at a time when SYMBOL SHIFT was pressed.

The manual provided with the cassette explains in detail the use of the keyboard, the accessing of the Kit and Pre Defined commands, the alarm clock, find and substitute, program tracing and the user defined keys. There is a complete index of the Kit and of the Pre Defined commands. A chapter is dedicated to the customising of the toolkit. Microdrive owners may save the ULTRAKIT on microdrive with the instructions supplied. Several poke addresses are provided to facilitate customisation of the various displays and printouts.

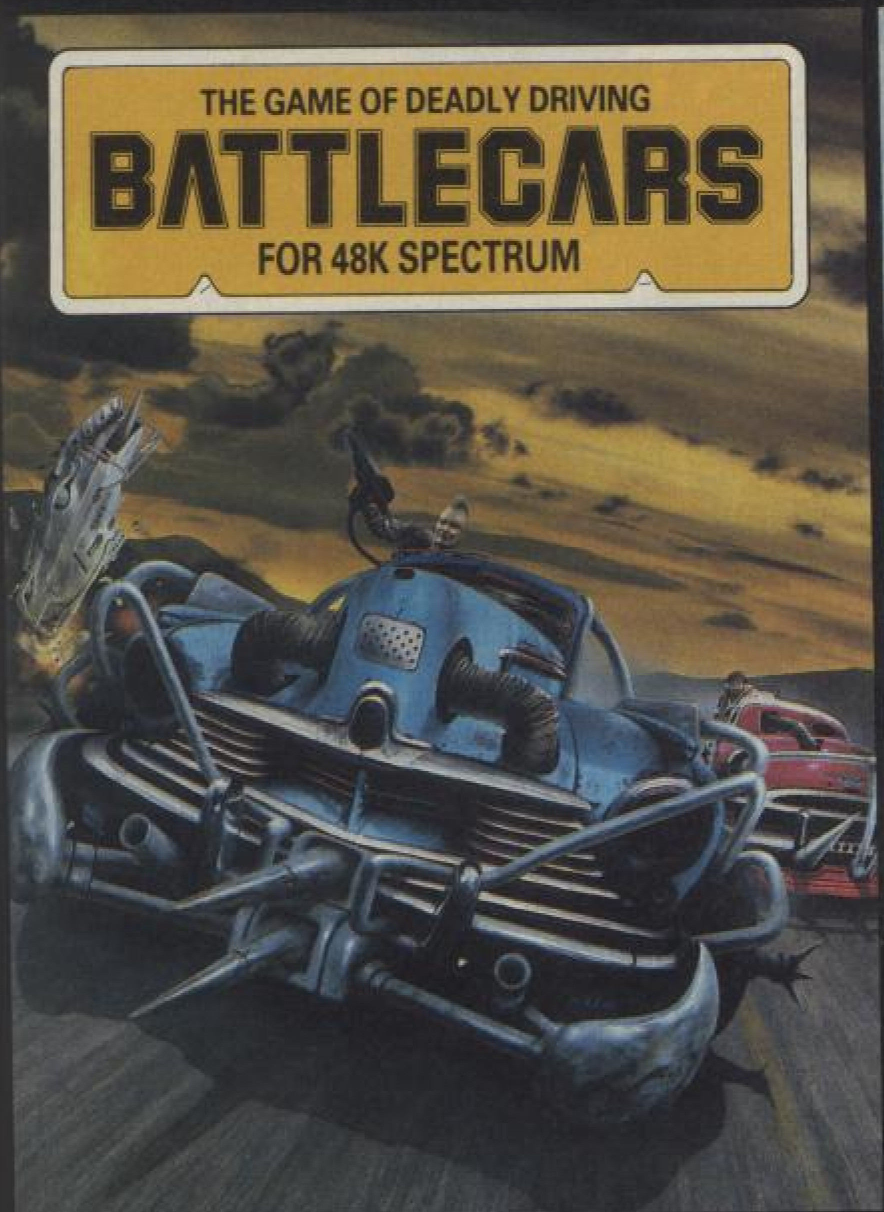
ULTRAKIT is a must for any serious Basic programmer, as it improves and compliments the Sinclair Basic in the editing and debuggung area, which makes life a lot easier when creating extensive Basic programs.

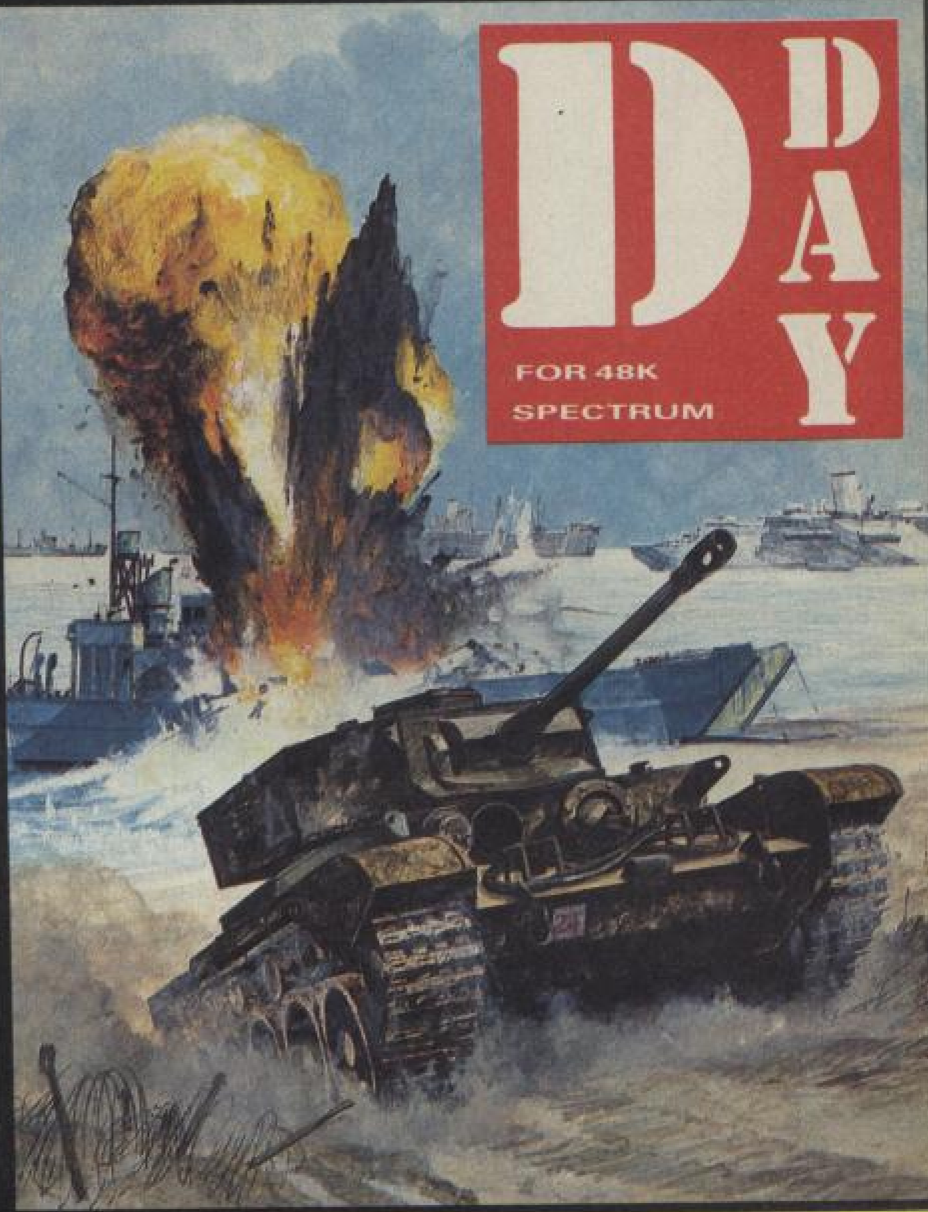
Franco Frey

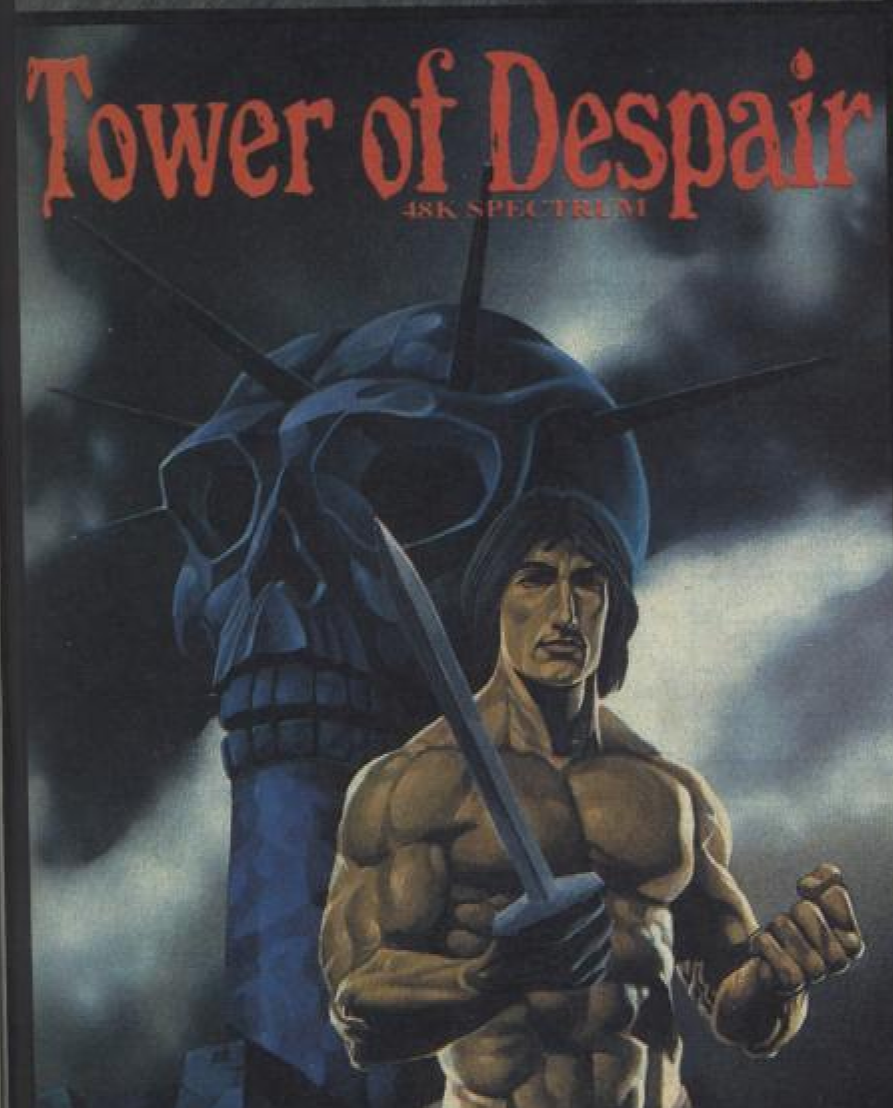
Program: ULTRAKIT
Producer: Hisoft, 180 High Street North, Dunstable, Bedfordshire LU6 1AT, Tel. (0582) 696421
Memory required:48K
Price: £9.45

ULTRAKIT

The New Force in Software



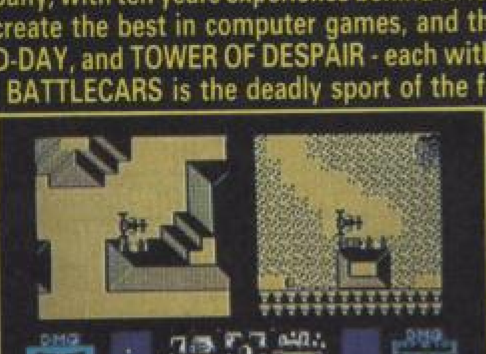




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BATTLECARS is the deadly sport of the future...arm your battlecar with your chosen weapons, and select your battleground; a gruelling speed circuit or a town centre labyrinth. BATTLECARS is a one or two player game of skill, nerve and cunning.



D-DAY is a superb graphic wargame based on the Normandy landings of 1944. Two players take the Allied and German sides, battling through four seperate scenarios. D-DAY offers an enduring tactical challenge to players tired of simple arcade action.

In TOWER OF DESPAIR, Games Workshop has used its ten years of experience in role-playing games to create an outstanding adventure. It includes two entire 48K programs, and a guide containing a history, map, and illustrated clues.

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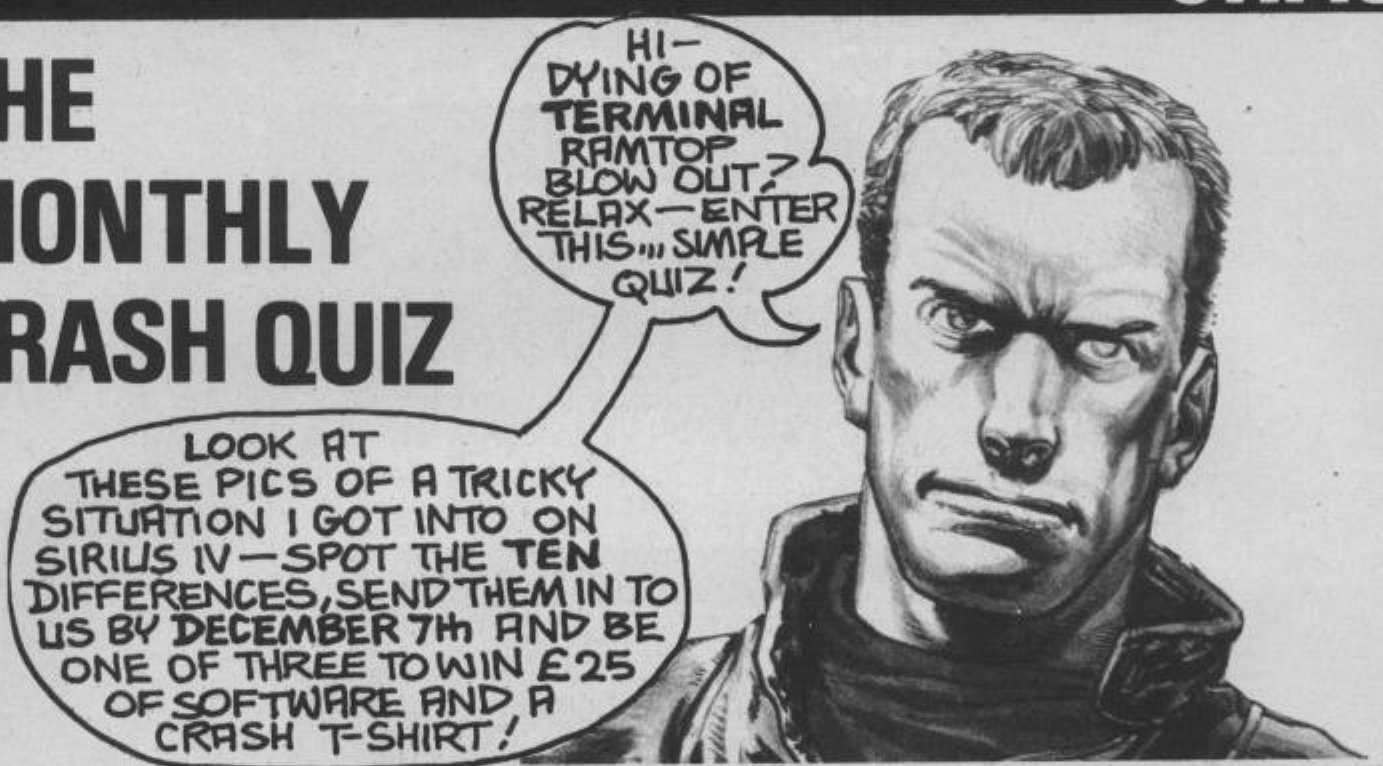
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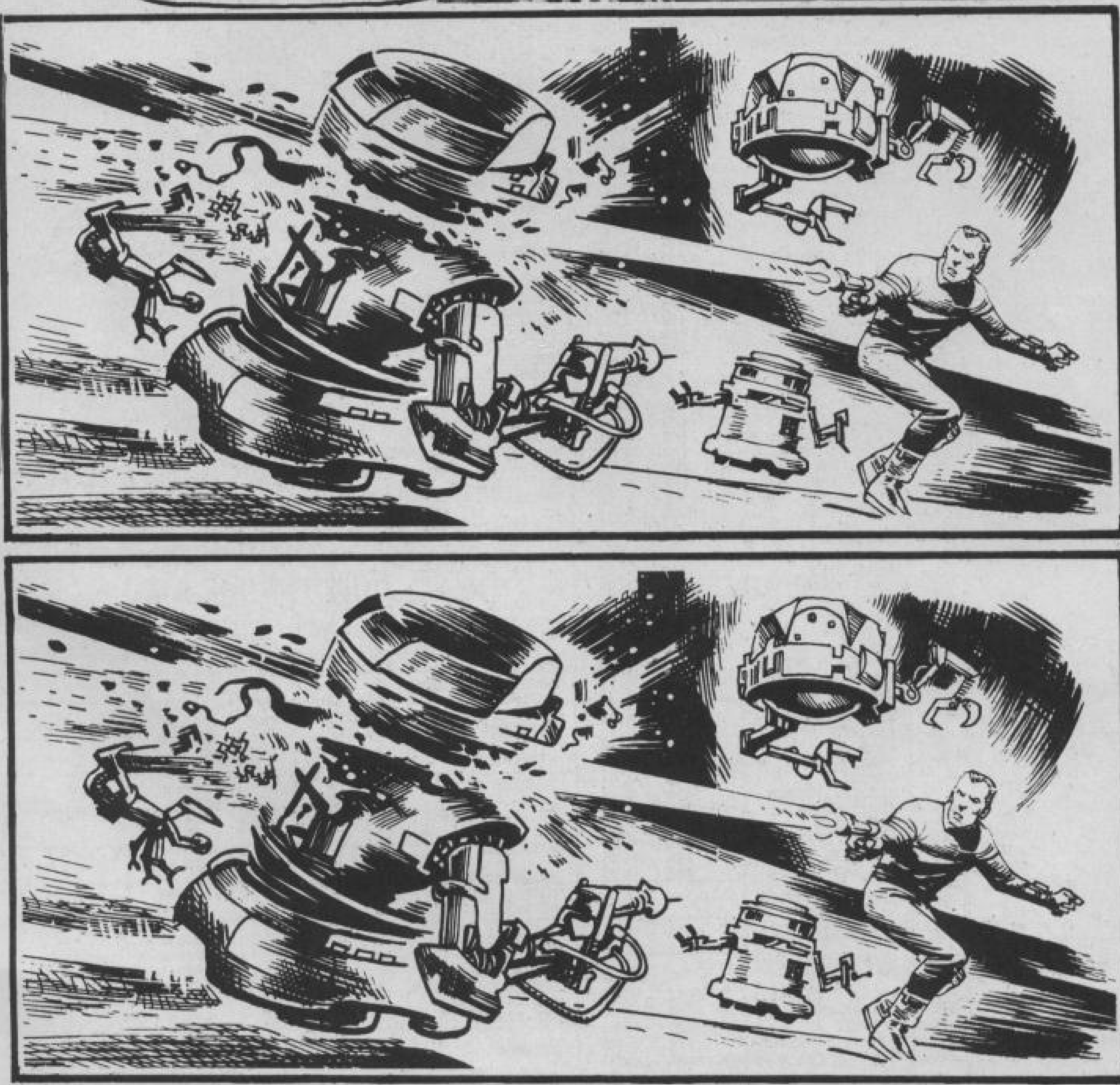
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D·A·R·K S·T·A·R



Passing a planet at Hyper-speed!

DARK STAR

Producer: **Design Design**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£7.50**
Language: **Machine code**
Author: **Simon Bratell**

It's taken quite a while between previewing *Dark Star* and reviewing it. Much of this has had to do with the fact that programmer Simon Bratell kept fiddling with the game, making it faster and faster until now it must surely win the accolade as the fastest Spectrum graphics ever. It would be a mistake to assume that this wire frame game is a copy of the popular arcade machine game 'Star Wars', because although it resembles it in some respects, it differs a lot in many important ways and, in any case, it was designed long before 'Star Wars' appeared in the arcades.

Anyway, onto the game. The *Dark Star* galaxy is divided into a 16 by 16 grid of sectors in the galactic plain. All the spurious blurb which gets you going is very detailed and well worth avoiding, best to dive in through the fabled front end which has been user defined out of existence! Selecting 'instructions' on screen is much better - it says, 'Fly around the universe. If it moves shoot it. If it doesn't shoot it anyway. If it's square fly through it!'

Keys for control are left, right, up, down, accelerate, decelerate and fire, any of which may be used on any key or all the same one if you like. Anyway, onto the game. There is a sort of adventurish and strategy overtone to *Dark Star* in as much as you are trying to clear the place of alien forces. The action takes place over three different areas, deepest space, hyperspace (accessed through Warp Gates, which are rotating yellow squares) and on the surface of numerous planets. When the planets in a sector of space have been cleared of aliens, using a Warp Gate will take you into another sector.

In space alien fighters will swoop on you, firing bolts of plasma and they do this by prediction, so it's best to avoid flying straight for too long. Your firing is done by directing the cross wire cursor at targets. Shield energy may be increased by flying through rotating blue squares (energy concentrations). The Warp Gates have four opening and shutting sections which allow you to hyperspace North, South, East or West. Whilst in hyperspace you must travel along through a series of squares. The tunnel winds about in a lively fashion and breaking through its walls puts a heavy load on your shields.

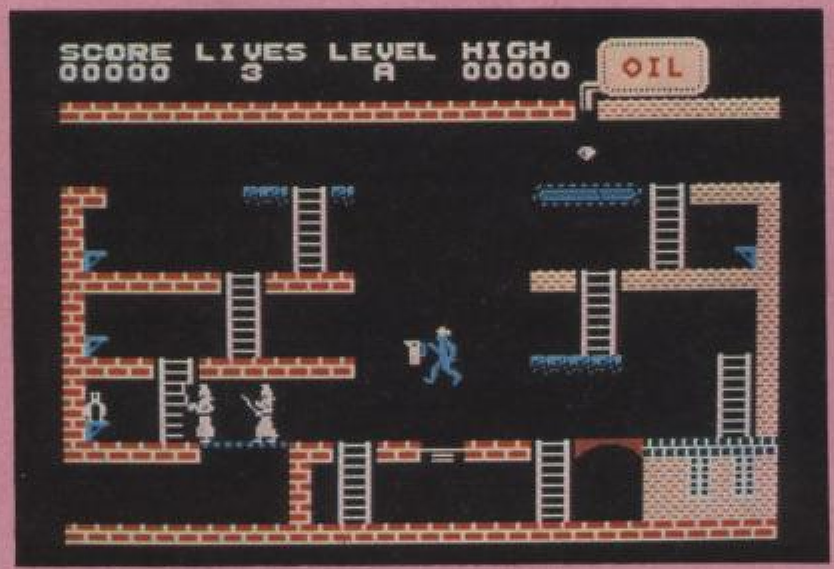
Planetfall is achieved by flying straight at one. The surface has towers occupied by the enemy which fire at you. Shooting at the towers will cause them to collapse. A map display of the galaxy indicates your position and shows where the forces are concentrated as lightly, well and heavily defended, with a further designation of 'military centre'. A similar display can be used on the surface of a planet. This shows bases, fuel dumps, space ports and so on. Your craft cannot leave the surface of a planet until all the enemy bases have been destroyed.

Dark Star is far too complicated for a mere collator of reviews to explain, something which was fully intended by its designer, so it is best to try it out for yourself! Its much vaunted features include the universe, stopwatch mode, 2 million way movement, full screen

T·U·R·M·O·I·L

TURMOIL

Producer: **Bug-Byte**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **Machine code**
Author: **David Turner**



Leaping on the giant spring to gain great height

Here we have what Bug-Byte describe as a multi-screened animated platform-type game. *Turmoil* certainly is a platform game, although a very varied one, containing 26 screens with a multitude of hazards and layouts. The game features Mick the Mechanic, who must collect enough oil for his car to get it going. On each screen there is a different car sitting in the garage. It's invisible until you start pouring oil over it which makes it appear. As soon as it is fully visible it will drive off and you get to the next screen. As you progress through the screens the cars get more sleek and expensive (from a Mini to a Porsche and beyond).



On each screen there is a dripping tap of oil at the top. Mick must go and collect a can, then make his way to the tap and fill the can before going to the garage. Life is made more difficult by swinging ropes, poles, conveyor belts and a couple of angry Arabs who don't approve of having their oil stolen. Now and again tools appear in different locations which ought to be collected and taken back to the shed structure at the bottom right of the screen, otherwise the Arabs will become angrier.

Any game must have something that distinguishes it from previous ones, and *Turmoil* has a very novel difference in the large spring-like trampolines which both Mick and the Arabs use to leap up onto the higher platforms. Mick's only protection is to spill drops of oil on which the Arabs slip up, removing them from the game for a few moments. Unfortunately this is also guaranteed to kill Mick off as well if he's not careful of where he treads.

CRITICISM

● '*Turmoil* is a classic platform game and overall a very good game. The graphics are of a high quality and work well with few attribute problems. The colours are excellent and everything makes for a slick, well executed program. This game is fun to play and addictive. If you like platform games then you will probably like *Turmoil* which is a bit different from the *Manic Miner* type game. Well worth buying.'

D·A·R·K S·T·A·R

playing area (with graphics in the border area), and its makers say it does not include Materialisations, Sprites (naturally), Unused RAM (who needs it) Stupid Scenario (there is a bit about the Evil Lord's tyrannical empire however), and no Magic Rings (wot no rings!). The other thing is this amazing front end which defines the meaning of 'user' and allows customisation of the game. For his endeavours in the field of advancing home computer games, programmer Simon Bratell has insisted that CRASH give *Dark Star* 100 for the Use of Computer rating. . .

CRITICISM

● 'When I first saw *Dark Star* I thought it was a boring old copy of 'Star Wars' because at first glance it looks like it, but how could I be so wrong? Your task, to go round the universe and blast everything into nothingness, is almost impossible as there can be up to 204 planets with 5 bases on each. All the games I have seen from Crystal (Design Design) have had quite useful front ends, but this takes the biscuit, and makes it into a playable game even when you're useless at it. I hope this works out as a CRASH smash, because it deserves it just for the front end alone and the amusing, ever changing hi-score tables. A word of warning, I found the hyper load made it difficult to load, but perseverence is worth it.'

● *'Dark Star has, to say the least, stunningly fast and smooth 3D vector graphics. They are not super detailed but the rest makes up for it. The game is fairly difficult to play at first, taking quite a bit of time to master.* Dark Star *will be the sort of game that grows on you as time goes by.'*

● 'After numerous attempts, numerous tape decks, I managed to get *Dark Star* loaded, though the way I did it was unethical. Well, onto the game; it's certainly the best and certainly the fastest 3D shoot em up game I've ever played to date (note the 'to date'). This game is very user friendly (pity the same can't be said about the author - he will know who I am!) offering truly user definable keys - you can program one key to do everything, although not much will happen if you do this. You can define whether you want nasty and horrible aliens with deadly weapons, or nice ones that can't kill you off, and what type of format you want the screen to take. *Dark Star* has many amusing touches like the hall of fame - most times you load it, there are different 'names' (one time had bits of songs in it, another had references from Monty Python films). All in all *Dark Star* is a very good game with some nice effects. Incidentally there is another game on the cassette, but you need a code word to get at it, and no one's saying what it is (yes - the first reviewer proof game). Signed, Yours, the 'orrible little reviewer (I hope you're satisfied with this review).

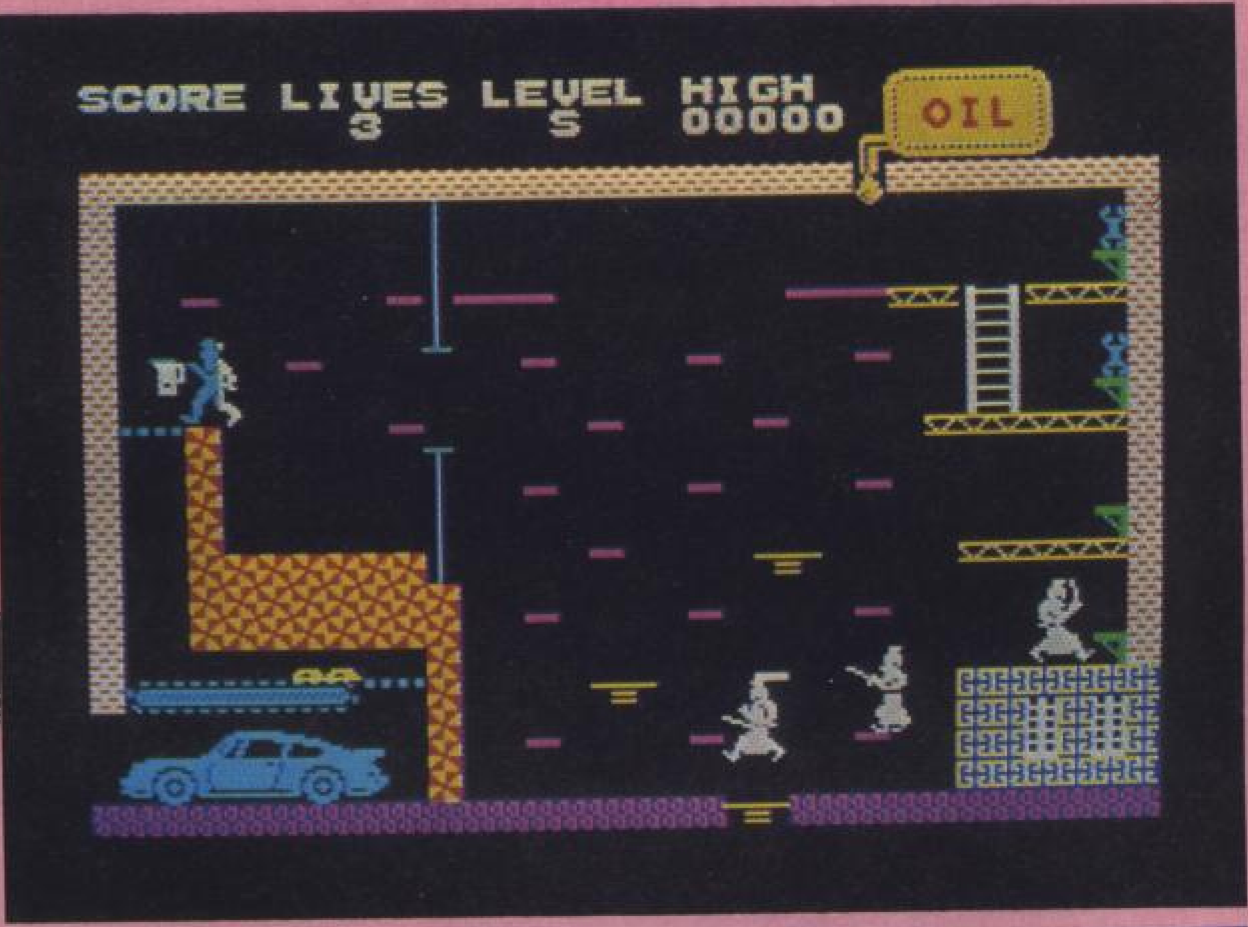
COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable to the Nth degree
Joystick: Kempston, Fuller, Protek, AGF, Sinclar 2, Para-Systems
Keyboard play: exceptionally responsive, good positions through UDK
Use of colour: above average, good for wire frame and a welcome addition to this type of game
Graphics: breathtakingly fast, though not very detailed
Sound: very good
Skill levels: definable through front end
Lives: only 1
Special features: flexible front end, and second program included
General rating: excellent shoot em up, certainly the fastest.

Use of computer	100%
Graphics	88%
Playability	86%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	85%
Value for money	87%
Overall	**89%**



T·U·R·M·O·I·L



One Porsche complete in the garage



● *'It must be said that this is quite an original platform game. Screen graphics are highly variable and exceptionally pleasing to the eye. Playing characters are large, well animated and detailed. I especially like the trampolines where you have to time it properly to jump when the tension in the spring is right to give you a high leap. Timing the swinging ropes is also difficult, although not half as difficult as some games which have used these devices - this is a pleasing factor. The pace of the game speeds up as you progress through the various screens, not in the sense that the characters move about more quickly, but in the sense that more tools appear and as a consequence the Arabs get angrier and come after you harder and there are more Arabs as you go along. I love the idea of having cars that alter from screen to screen, progressing from the low class Mini through high performance sports cars (and maybe onto the supertax bracket). Overall I think this game has a high playability factor, and each screen definitely needs a different skill factor.'*

● 'Originality in a game is sometimes a question of an entirely new idea, and sometimes it's a question of intelligently re-using old ideas in a new way. *Turmoil* is one of the latter sort, and a very good one. All the elements have been combined like a classic recipe to make an excellently playable, funny and addictive game that has an entirely new flavour to it. There is also a very good training mode which gives you an opportunity to have a go on the higher screens for practice. There are marvellous animated graphics, and the leaping Arabs flashing their long scimitars are particularly good. A very good game that should keep you playing for quite some time.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/Z up/down, I/P left/right and M to jump
Joystick: not indicated on the preview copy
Keyboard play: highly responsive - 'a joy'
Use of colour: excellent
Graphics: excellent
Sound:
Skill levels: progressive difficulty
Lives: 5
Screens: 26
Special features:
General rating: Very addictive, playable and satisfying. Good value.

Use of computer	84%
Graphics	90%
Playability	91%
Getting started	89%
Addictive qualities	95%
Value for money	91%
Overall	**90%**

THE HOUSE JACK BUILT

Producer: **Thor**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **C. Kerry**

Third in the series of 'Jack' games from **Thor**, *The House Jack Built* is a little different from the first two *Jack and the Beanstalk* and *Giant's Revenge* in as much as it has many more screens and, more importantly, it plays differently because unlike the other two, you are not killed off by deviating from the very narrow, preset path.

The game takes place in Jack's house (he's obviously not poor any more), which has several rooms, some basement rooms and caves, a garden, a large maze, a roof which then leads onto the moon, where there are several more locations to see. The object is to go around and collect all the available objects whilst avoiding the ferocious house pets (or is that pests?). The score is by percentage of collected objects.

You always start off in the same room - the living room - but getting killed doesn't mean having to start over and you are returned to the 'death' location ready to start again.

CRITICISM

● *'The House Jack Built* has very good graphics and sound (although it drives you barmy after a while). The characters move around well and the various scenes are well thought out and drawn. When you change rooms you must be ready for anything, as you are nearly always in immediate danger. I think Jack is the wrong colour as he tends to blend in with the background at times. Your pets are a bit weird as they do not always kill you. I thought this game was quite good, but I don't like the strong colour. '

● *'After playing the other two games and being a bit disappointed with them, I was all geared up to have a good moan at* The House Jack Built, *but I must confess that it's not what I expected at all - in fact it's quite good. The game is the same idea as* JATB *and* GR *but the 'routes' to get to an object aren't so pre-defined. The game is fun to play with plenty of rooms to explore. All the backgrounds of each screen are beautifully drawn, though colour isn't always used wonderfully because Jack is yellow and clashes with their strong colour. The game contains a good continuous tune that can be switched off if it drives you crazy. Overall* The House Jack Built *is a fun, addictive get - the object - that - is - in - the - most - difficult - place game, and*

Unlike the previous games no specific route is necessary



worth buying.'

'I wasn't very optimistic about this game at first after seeing Thor's previous games on the 'life of Jack' theme, but to my amazement this game is quite playable. This game is still very difficult but not half as finicky and precise as the previous two games. Graphics are of the same type, colourful and with attribute problems, also Jack himself is almost invisible - again. . . The are many more locations to see in THJB, all quite nicely drawn and fairly easy to get to. Objects to collect, of course, are very difficult and are positioned at a key point in the screen where all the pets meet and try to destroy you. There's no doubt that these three games from Thor look distinctly different to anyone else's, mostly because of the strong colours employed in the graphics, yet in a way it's as though too much colour has been used, which makes it somewhat tiring on the eye, and can be as bad sometimes as having too little colour. Much more playable and addictive than the two previous games if not yet as appealing as it should be.'



COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right and O/K up/down
Joystick: Kempston
Keyboard play: quite responsive, sensible keys, and better than with joystick
Use of colour: over use of colour, nevertheless, bright and cheerful
Graphics: detailed, varied and smooth, sometimes hard to see characters with colour clash
Sound: continuous tune and spot effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 4
Screens: 20 plus
Special features: Currah microspeech
General rating: two reviewers thought it was good, one thought above average.



Use of computer	73%
Graphics	78%
Playability	76%
Getting started	76%
Addictive qualities	67%
Value for money	68%
Overall	**73%**

Gilligan's Gold

Producer: **Ocean**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.90**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **R. Rhodes & K. Burkhill**

Platform-type games have certainly come a long way over the year. *Gilligan's Gold* is a good example of this development. Three screens, sitting side by side, make up the gold mine where Gilligan the intrepid hero is collecting the sacks and attempting to get them all into his wheelbarrow, which is up on the top level. The mine is a warren of passages and shafts with ladders in them and lifts. Sometimes the gold is behind a blocked wall and here the pickaxe comes in handy. It has a second use too - knocking outlaws over the head, for the mine is infested with them, and they are after Gilligan and the gold. They can also be knocked out by dropping gold sacks down shafts on top of them.

At the bottom of the mine a railcar runs up and down along the mine. It's possible to ride in this by hanging from the roof at a few marked points and then dropping onto the car at the right moment. This also works for the other railcars that run on the other levels. Gilligan is not allowed to fall more than a level or he loses a life, and being hit by a railcar isn't much better either.

CRITICISM

● *'Gilligan's Gold* is another Commodore 64 to Spectrum conversion and unfortunately it hasn't come out as well as the other recent Ocean games. Needless to say though, it is still good, but the characters (you and your enemies) aren't as detailed as in the C64 version. The sound is very good, playing a nice little tune. This is a fun game to play, but I don't think it's got tremendous lasting appeal like, say, *Decathlon*, one of my all time favourites.'

● *'The graphics are not ultra-brill, but this does not spoil the game which is really challenging. There are quite a few features which really add to the game. I almost died laughing watching the demo, it had lots of funny bits in it. I enjoyed the game itself even more. It's a bit like a Harold Lloyd Buster Keaton arcade game.'*

● 'Whatever's the matter with the programmers today - are they being paid by Arthur Scargill, or is it just a coincidence that everyone's gone mining mad; maybe they're just slow to catch onto the Manic Miner trend? *Gilligan's Gold* is another mining game, but more so than the others. The fact is that you have got to collect the gold in your wheelbarrow, and hack away at walls with your pick, whilst being chased by outlaws. Animation is this game is quite wonderful in some respects, such as when you knock one of the outlaws out - you can see stars around their heads and when they're coming round they start to pant, and you see their stomachs start to rise and fall. Even details such as a barrow's wheel whizzes round as you push it. I must say I do like the mining carts, which can be your enemy or saviour. There are only three screens to this game, but I think there's plenty to keep you going for quite a while, and besides, if you clear all the three screens of gold, maybe there is a different type of layout - that's left for you to find out though! Taking everything into consideration, I think this will prove to be quite an addictive game as it is a very playable game. I like it.'



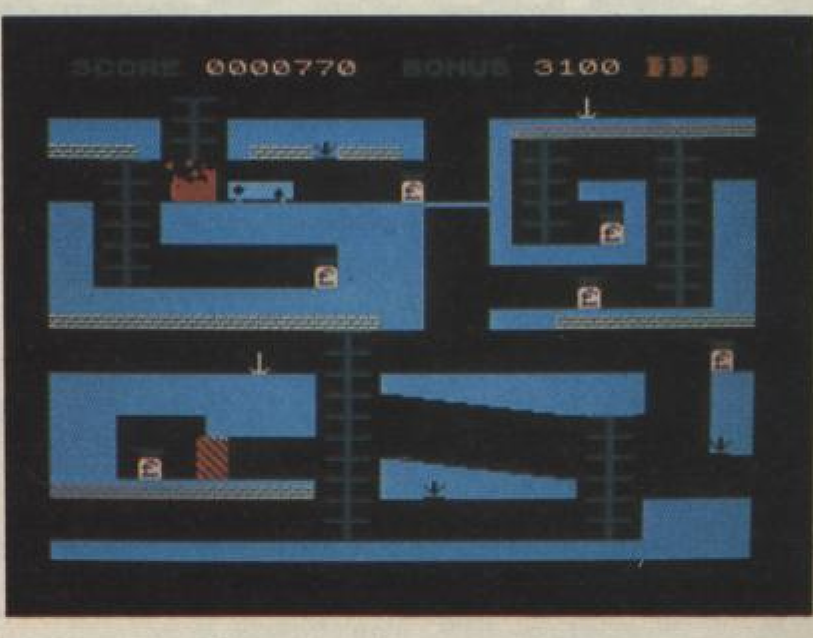
Grab the gold and run

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/W left/right, P/ENTER up/down, SPACE for all actions
Joystick: Kempston, Sinclair 2, Protek, AGF
Keyboard play: responsive, but up/down and action keys are a bit awkwardly laid out
Use of colour: good
Graphics: large definite shapes and generally good
Sound: continuous tune
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 3
Special features:
General rating: very good, playable and addictive.

Use of computer	80%
Graphics	77%
Playability	80%
Getting started	79%
Addictive qualities	78%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**79%**

Poor Gilligan, hit by a railcar





The Red Kipper Flies at Midnight

YOU GET HOME ONE EVENING to discover a message on your answering machine. Something you'd thought hidden for good has reared its ugly head once again. Valkyrie 17 is active.

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Your cover is good. Very good in fact. You spend a few days sniffing around and then head up towards Lake Bruntz. You check in to the Glitz Hotel. It's the last lead you have. You seem to be getting nowhere.

Then on your way to the bar you sense a movement in the shadows. You feel a blow on your temple. And everything goes black...

Valkyrie 17 is an Adventure featuring both graphic and text locations. You will meet several different characters some of whom may help you while others see your demise as their sole purpose in life.

Included in the pack is a comprehensive dossier on Valkyrie 17. On the reverse of the cassette tape are the answerphone messages. And then of course there's the game itself.

LOADING TIME	**5½ minutes.**	**MICRODRIVE**	**X/FER FUNCTION**
LOCATIONS	**100+**	**FUN FACTOR 8**	
LEVEL	**?**		
SOUND	**Beep Beep**		

HINTS

Watch your back, try not to get killed and mind your language.

The RamJam Corporation cannot accept responsibility for injury either mental or physical caused during the playing of Valkyrie 17. Furthermore the existence of these words affects your statutory rights.

VALKYRIE 17

Valkyrie 17 is distributed by Palace Virgin Gold, 69 Flempton Road, London E10 7NL. Telephone: 01-539 5566. Available from all leading wholesalers.

AMSTRAD BBC CBM64 SPECTRUM MEMOTECH NASCOM ATARI

"You really can't go wrong with any Level 9 game as they are all brilliant." *Crash Micro Sept 84*

RETURN TO EDEN

Level 9's first amazing full-colour graphical adventure.

Return to Eden is the long-awaited sequel to Level 9's top-selling Snowball adventure, set on the weirdest planet ever. Now it's here with 240 locations, masses of puns and puzzles and with hundreds of pictures in the AMSTRAD, CBM 64 and Spectrum versions.

"Whichever machine you own, if you have the vaguest tendency towards adventure playing then you must try one of these games (unfortunately you'll probably end up wanting to buy the lot."
– Computing Today, Aug 84

"The Level 9 Adventures are superbly designed and programmed, the content first rate. The implementation of Colossal Cave (Adventure) is nothing short of brilliant; rush out and buy it. While you're at it, buy their others, too. Simply smashing!"
– Your 64, June 84

"Level 9 – arguably the producers of the best adventure games in the UK – have done it again. Lords of Time is a sparkling addition to its stable of winners."
– Acorn User, July 84



"One of the best adventure games I have ever had the pleasure to get my hands on. I can recommend Dungeon Adventure without the slightest fear of being contradicted. This is a massive sojourn into the unknown."
– Memopad, Oct 84

"The Saga of Erik the Viking . . . a remarkable Adventure game. It carries all the hallmarks of a Level 9 Adventure – problem, text display and size of map – with graphics of a standard I have not yet seen before in an Adventure."
– Computer & Video Games, Oct 84

"I thoroughly recommend these Adventures, they are excellent value for money. No self-respecting Adventure-addict should be without them. I believe Level 9 are producing a series of Adventures which should be regarded as classics."
– Page 6, July 84

Available from the HMV Shop and good computer stores everywhere. If your local dealer doesn't stock Level 9 adventures yet, use the coupon to buy them from us, or ask him to contact: Centresoft, Microdealer UK, Lightning, Leisuresoft, R&R, Lime Tree, PCS (SW), MCD, Wonderbridge etc.

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SNOWBALL: Immense Science Fiction game with over 7000 locations.	☐	☐
RETURN TO EDEN: Vegetarian adventure. (Amstrad, CBM 64 and Spectrum versions have 240 pictures).	☐	☐
LORDS OF TIME: Imaginative romp through World History.	☐	☐
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DEREK BREWSTER'S Adventure Trail

YOU'VE NEVER HAD IT SO GOOD

If you glance through the marks for this month's reviews you will notice one 9 is awarded and all the rest have 8 marks as an Overall Value. This, I think you will agree, is an exceptionally high standard, and is remarkable in that every game reviewed here could be recommended without hesitation, as each has some quality that makes it stand out from the crowd. Clearly the microcomputer software market is seasonal to some extent (ie. the run up to Christmas represents a huge sales potential) but perhaps in the case of the adventure market, where the games take a very considerable time to develop, it is even more so.

So, have I gone soft with seasonal spirit this month? No, I think not, for these games really are good.

What this all adds up to is that if you know anyone who packed away their Spectrums over the summer then you should now tell them to extract it from its box and fill its place with a cushion of straw and a tortoise, because, when it comes to Spectrum software, you've never had it so good.

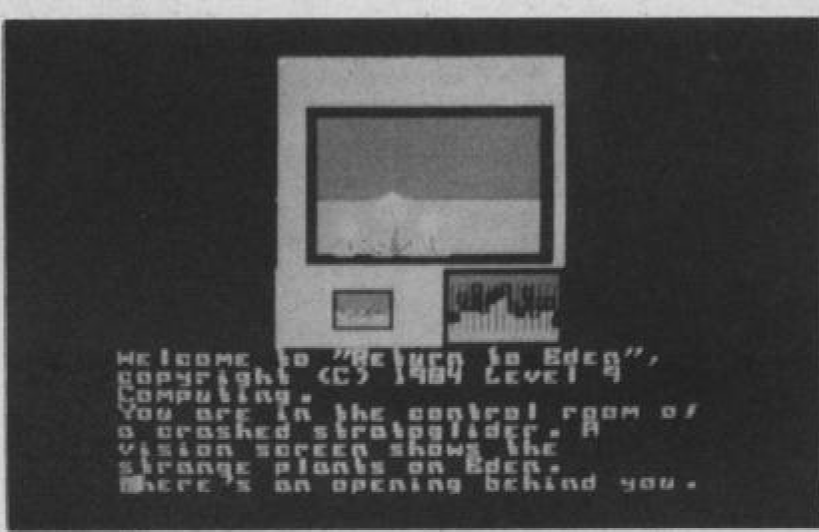
RETURN TO EDEN

Producer: **Level 9 Computing**
Retail price: **£9.95**

The Silicon Dream Trilogy consists of *Snowball*, *Return to Eden* and the yet to be released *The Worm in Paradise*. This, the second adventure in the trilogy, starts where *Snowball* left off, and has been written using Level 9's ever increasing library of compression techniques to give a full-bodied, more complete narrative with about 250 locations and 240 pictures. As with Artic, Level 9 have deemed that all truly commercial adventures must accommodate graphics from now on, and I am pleased to report that in this particular case the graphics, far from being a distraction, actually add to the quality and flavour of the game. The locations are exotic and the scenes psychedelic.

If Level 9 have a boffin image they've done themselves no harm with their latest technological breakthrough, the type-ahead. This idea allows you to carry on typing commands even when the program isn't ready for them, so you can type a whole series of short instructions and then watch as the program carries them out. Recent notoriety and fame have not ruined a cottage industry; Level 9 still provide clue sheet forms with each 'Welcome to Eden' booklet.

Snowball 9 carries two million sleeping colonists to Eden, the only habitable planet in the Eriadni A binary starsystem. Eden's plant life is legendary and was probably seeded by long-vanished aliens. City building on the planet at first went well but problems developed as the myriad plants and cunning creatures adapted to fight back. Robots have been making all important decisions since the late 2100s and run the colonisation program. Within a wall built to protect the city, the robots work ceaselessly to perfect the environment for its fragile and vulnerable human colonists. The city still looks new but impressions are misleading; its foundations are broken by a million root cracks and vermin infest the lower levels. What may be worse, the robot army has been fighting too long.



You play Kim Kimberley who has just saved the interstellar transport, Snowball 9, from disaster. Unfortunately the control room vidcoms show how you enter and hurl a bomb engulfing the room in flames. The resulting trial finds you guilty and you are summarily sentenced to death. The waldroids close in and, rather than stay to argue your case, you think it wiser to flee in the stratoglider lifeboat to become the first human to land on the planet Eden. Crewed by people who think you are a murderer, Snowball 9 orbits far above you. But alas, the interstellar transport itself is in danger, as it has entered orbit off schedule and, due to damage, ignores all attempts at



radio contact. The robots on the planet below, unable to chance a hostile presence in orbit, are wary...

Playing the game is made all the easier by Level 9's type-ahead, sure-footed input and friendly vocabulary, including WEAR which has you wearing clothing without first having to GET it, an A(GAIN) command which repeats the last entry, and another innovation - IT to mean the previous specified object, eg. LIGHT LAMP, then EXAMINE IT. The redefined character set gives a futuristic flavour (as does, of course, the myriad technological artifacts - vidcoms, tradclads, skyhooks) but it can be difficult to read when more than one Level 9 fanatic crowds around a small TV screen. Could this be the beginning of the monitor boom? I won't say too much concerning the plot itself having given away too much of *Snowball* in the CRASH July issue, well worth checking up if you're interested in how the trilogy began (and for some appallingly heavy-handed clues). Let me just say this of the game, it isn't just the graphics which are peculiar and psychedellic.

Return to Eden is a very worthy successor to the highly acclaimed *Snowball*. Far from being just another follow up, it is a new and exciting program in its own right and has many features which keep Level 9 at the top of intelligent science fiction computer exploration.

COMMENTS

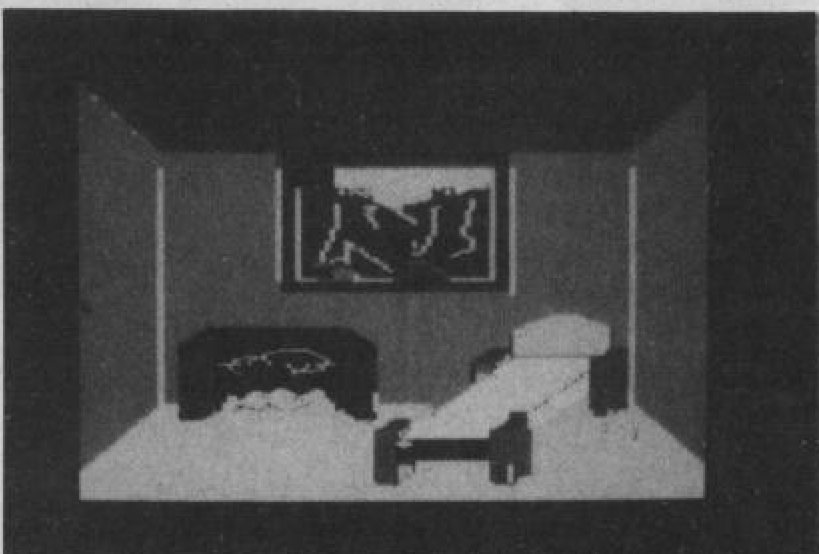
Difficulty: very difficult
Graphics: most locations and very good
Presentation: quite good, but a little cramped
Input facility: good, even with graphics
Response: good
Special features: type-ahead
General rating: very good

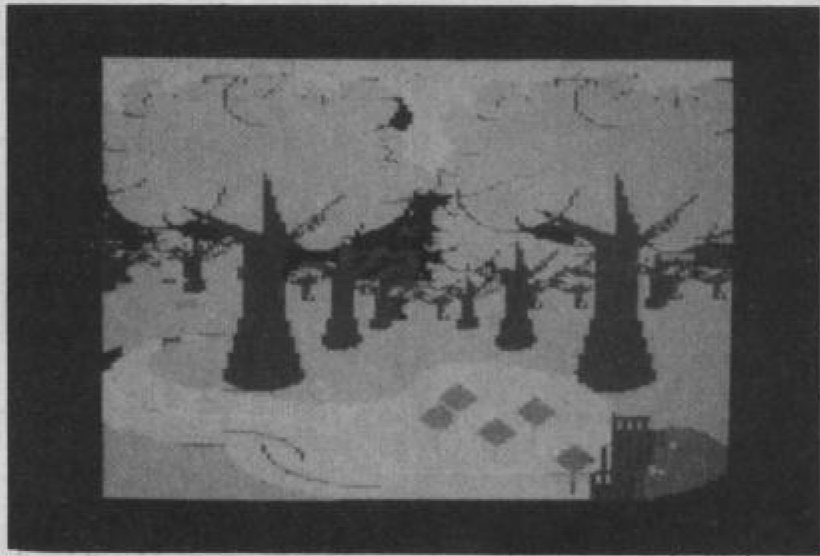
Atmosphere	**9**
Vocabulary	**8**
Logic	**7**
Debugging	**9**
Overall value	**8**

TWIN KINGDOM VALLEY

Producer: **Bug-Byte**
Retail price: **£7.95**

Twin Kingdom Valley was launched almost a year ago on the BBC/Electron and Commodore computers and became a best seller. Hence it is not surprising Bug-Byte should attempt a conversion to the Spectrum. but 'conversion to the Spectrum was considered impossible' due to its 'more restricted graphical capabilities'. It is in the graphics department where this otherwise excellent adventure disappoints, but the only reason I can forward is poor artistic design within the limitations imposed by the microcomputer. The Spectrum adventure market is now quite sophisticated and shows few signs of these 'restricted graphical capabilities' - far from it. In every other respect *Twin Kingdom Valley* is a very good adventure, especially for the novice.





The name of the program is unusual and you would be right to think it had some story behind it. It is not a valley you might have seen on one of those terrible Sunday afternoon films, no, it is a *mythical place* where two kings live. Since monarchy generally like it their own way, these two royals hate each other. As you roam the valley other creatures will live their lives perfectly naturally, only stopping a while to attack the occasional explorer - that's you. You play a typical adventurous and greedy human and your aim is to finish the game with as much wealth as possible. The gossip circulating around the valley is supplied to you at the touch of a button at the beginning.

Twin Kingdom Valley is one of many valleys surrounding the vast lake of Watersmeet said to have mystical properties derived from the many witches' potions spilled into its rivers and streams down the ages. It is said a wise man may look upon the secret of life located nearby (at No. 42?). You have rented a small hut from the innkeeper of The Sword Inn where your ill gotten gains may be stashed. Your strength will fail if stabbed or clubbed too often by the assorted belligerent creatures, but you will gradually recover if you can find a quiet patch. The authors reckon you'll find some of the clues in the pictures. I hope this doesn't entail scurrying around for books on Picasso and Cubism because, man! are some of these pics groovy (can anyone tell me what on earth the picture of the bar represents? But keep it sober, man).

The game has many features which give some indication of its high class pedigree. The first is a choice between six options to control how the game runs for you. These range from Draw picture if room unvisited, give long description to Don't draw picture, give short description. The option can be chaged to suit during play by simply typing OPTION. The next feature to impress is the use of view directions where you are told the direction in which you are looking out from a location and can actually see your progress towards castles, inns, caves, and waterfalls. Also, a list of verbs is provided and a refinement allows the speed of printing to be controlled via *TEXT. These features do not necessarily make a better adventure but they certainly show a willingness to please and is a sign that someone cares about craftmanship of the program - always a good sign.

You begin on a road by a wooden cabin. The hut fills the view to the north and so NORTH takes you inside. A deep solid beep accompanies each input but you must be careful with that confounded auto-repeat which, although being worse than useless, seemingly gets everywhere. This first location is a veritable store of goodies and it's good to see an adventure which presents the explorer with a few easy first steps to ease him into the swing of things. You are even given a friendly companion - an elf - who may beat you to some of the goodies if you're slow off the mark but will kindly give them over if you ask him politely.

Being one who can smell a rancid beer pot at thirty hydrometers, I made my way east to The Sword Inn to quaff a beer in palatial surroundings. I was a little surprised to see the 'Work Ethic' currently sweeping the nation (well, Surbiton) making a stand in the computer games world - a fraternity more renowned for growing

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hair and perihperals (after typesetting, this will no doubt read 'growing hair on peripherals'). But there was evidence - as I sat refreshed after downing a pitcher of ale I happened to check my score (still 0) but what is this? My strength is reduced from 190 to 160. Fiendish!

Your pilgrimage to the Inn is made that bit lighter by some strange and certainly colourful graphics of the inn which grow in perspective as you approach, rather like the famous scenes in *Lords of Midnight*. Most of your early game will be spent finding the weapons to ward off Trolls and Gorillas who lunge at you with broad swords and wooden clubs. These assailants apart, it's a simple enough matter to wander around a great many locations although of course, you'll often get the feeling you're too far down the line with not enough weapons or gadgets to support you. The graphics, should you choose an option with them, are not too slow and it is clear when the program is ready to proceed as the picture becomes sharp and clear.

Twin Kingdom Valley is an adventure import from the BBC/Electron and Commodore computers and like all conversions has some peculiarities in style, in this case - the graphics. On its own merits, the Spectrum version is very responsive and friendly and has many superb qualities. Well worth exploring by any adventurer.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: hard to say. This is a long and involved game but probably not too difficult
Graphics: full screen graphics in 150 locations although many are repeated
Presentation: excellent
Input facility: very good
Response: interactive characters acting somewhat like those in *Valhalla*
Special features: Currah microspeech
General rating: very good

Atmosphere	**9**
Vocabulary	**7**
Logic	**7**
Debugging	**7**
Overall value	**8**

A Crash Smash

OUT OF THE SHADOWS

Producer: **Mizar Computing**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Author: **RM Walker & RMR Woodward**

If you are intelligent and into fantasy games (and I think the two go together no matter what some might say) then you'll like this one.

Out of the Shadows is a game that follows in the footsteps of such notables as *Black Crystal* and *Crusoe* but, like so many games reviewed this month, jumps straigh to the top of the pile - for my money it is the best arcade-adventure yet. Like a pop record that grows on you, the game becomes more compelling the longer you play it. It lures you deep into a fantasy world of monsters, magic and mayhem requiring a subtle blend of technical skill and out and out battle bravado. Many have vowed to bring Dungeons and Dragons scenarios to the computer screen but surely it is to this game that fantasy devotees should now turn their attention. Here is yet another game where you are left asking yourself, how did they get it all in there?

Mizar tell me the game combines the real-time action of arcade with the freedom of exploration of adventure, and I can add, it's an exceedingly complex yet always fascinating little masterpiece of programming. Impressive figures are fired out like computer share prices on the stock exchange. 30 commands, 500 locations, 14 different types of monster, 50 different types of object and, if a human hero is too corny for you, how about an elf or a dwarf? A unique feature of the game is the way the ground about you is illuminated by the flame from your torch or lantern, which is essential below ground or after dark. As you move around, shadows sweep across the floor in a very realistic fashion.

Themes are developed to the full in this game. When in the dungeon you must keep an eye on the level of the oil in your lantern and check how many torches you have left in case you need them. You soon discover that a lantern casts a larger light than a torch, and stand bewildered, both by your predicament and by the fine attention to detail on the part of the programmers as your last torch gradually goes out, the lighted area diminishing as the darkness closes in around you. You think you catch sight of a creature's head popping out from around a corner and in this way you soon learn to tread carefully about shadows where monsters, who rather deviously can see in the dark, creep up on you. They are so eager to clap their teeth on you that a little squeak can sometimes betray their presence giving you just enough time for an about turn.

So what exactly does play entail?

Firstly you choose your race elf, human or dwarf. An elf is more dextrous than a human but is less strong and has fewer hit points. However, as you might expect, he wields greater spell power. A dwarf is less dextrous, is stronger, has more hit points but less spell power. After giving your character a suitably long name, you can decide upon which of the six quests you will undertake. The same quest can be attempted by different players in competition where how long the game takes each player, and how many times it's been saved, will be the deciding factors. The permutations are extensive since on completing one quest a character, now a hero, can attempt a new quest, so you set off on a new scenario but take along the same character with his hard won possessions.





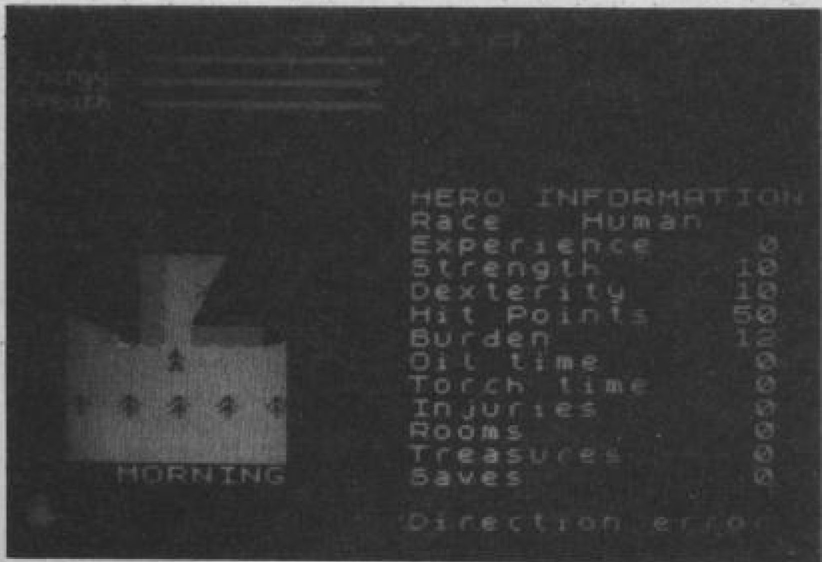
Once you have decided on your character, dungeon and quest, your character's name is displayed above a screen which first looks quite plain, that is until you do something. A small part of the screen is illuminated on the left-hand side; this is your home from where you begin your quest and to where you must return with the object of the quest. At the centre is a special place, the central healing cross, to which you may go at any time to heal your wounds. Out of your home and into the forests your main concerns are the collecting of treasures and the slaying of monsters. Possessions such as torches and copper coins are soon amassed by opening or literally attacking the various crates and jars. These valuables and commodities can then be taken to the shop for the buying and selling of provisions, including food. Later on, when using magic, you will need the food to counteract the drain imposed by the energy-sapping spells you cast. Destroying any foes that cross your path is character building; the experience points you gain lead to increased strength, dexterity and life force, while an award of a thousand points raises your character to a new experience level. A higher level brings with it more powerful adversaries as the player delves deeper below. However, matters are complicated by the burden of ever-increasing treasures which weigh you down and make you short of breath during combat, and also, the realisation that natural healing occurs faster nearer the surface. During heavy fighting your eyes wander up to three lines,indicating your Life, Energy and Breath. On the right-hand side of the screen the commentary of events scrolls upwards giving you information on what treasures you have found or how a battle is going. As you go down into deeper levels it scrolls more frantically as on every dark corner lie three or even four monsters.





INFO and LIST, which can be summoned up onto the right-hand side, are of particular interest. Checking INFO regularly gives you updates on Experience, Strength, Dexterity, Hit points, Burden, Oil and Torch Time, Injuries (eg. Left Arm), Rooms, Treasures and Saves. LIST tells you how many of each item you have (eg. spells, daggers, shields, torches, magic rings, ointments, etc.). The two commands that are in constant use are GO and ATTACK.

GO (or G space)E, W, SE, SW etc. moves you along the map until you cease pressing ENTER. If you now chose to attack this would be towards the last specified direction. Once devices like these are mastered the game verily flies along. Hence G space N, moves you north, ENTER moves you north again while an A now would see you attacking to the north. Your chance of hitting or dodging a monster depends upon both its dexterity and yours, and the amount of damage you can inflict depends on your strength. A good tactic is to position yourself so only one monster can attack you at a time as, if given the chance, they will descend upon you from all possible directions.



The maximum amount of damage you can sustain is called your hit points.

What makes the attack routine so impressive is its amazing realism. A monster, once beaten off, will avoid you should you cross its path again, for example, a rat on seeing its mate slain will often run off and in its panic, fall down a hole. Even after playing a game for some time a new feature will crop up, like the time a fracas with a dragon saw my lantern knocked over plunging me into darkness. Super stuff.

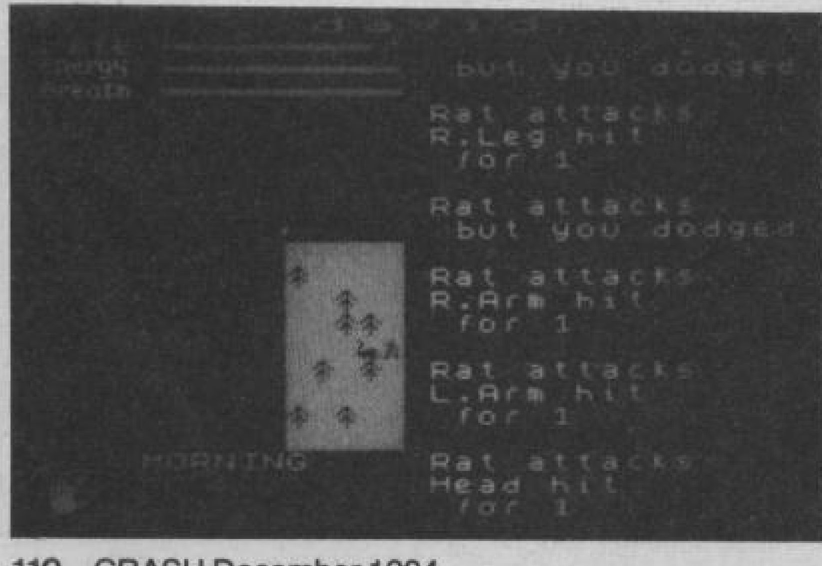
As you become more adept at fighting monsters and collecting treasure you become more concerned with the quest itself which entails travelling downwards from the surface by way of stairs (which in the latter stages are always populated by monsters) or down holes where a shield might protect you from the fall. This downward progression is most reminiscent of D&D. Monsters become faster, more devious, more agressive and inflict greater damage the lower you descend. This is reflected in the type of creatures you meet, which are of an increasingly exotic variety; rats give way to vicious skeletons followed by pernicious trolls, dragons and demons. The search for ever more precious treasures and fantastic magic keeps you forging on while rising up the experience levels gives immense satisfaction.

Out of the Sahdows is an immeasurably complex game which takes some time to get to know. I wholeheartedly recommend any arcade-adventure or fantasy fans to spend some time with this game as they will be rewarded with many happy hours play.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: easy to play but will take months to complete
Graphics: good, original lighting concept
Presentation: very good
Input facility: arcade response
Response: good
Special features:
General rating: excellent

Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	8
Logic	8
Debugging	10
Overall value	9



VALKYRIE 17

Producer: **Ram Jam Corporation**
Retail price: £ 9.99

I often choose to begin a review with a few lines telling you what I know about the company and the game in question. Due to a prediliction for untidiness I have misplaced the literature concerning this game. What I do know of the company is contentious. They were suspected of shady dealings and political intrigue in South America and, becoming unstuck when the country's ruling junta came to a sticky end exposing what lay behind a thick skein of secrecy, were heavily implicated in a honeycomb of leaky, transparent coverups, diplomatic raspberries, power-besotted gooseberries and giving a whole polysaccharide of embezzled condiments to the ruling party, The Preservatives.



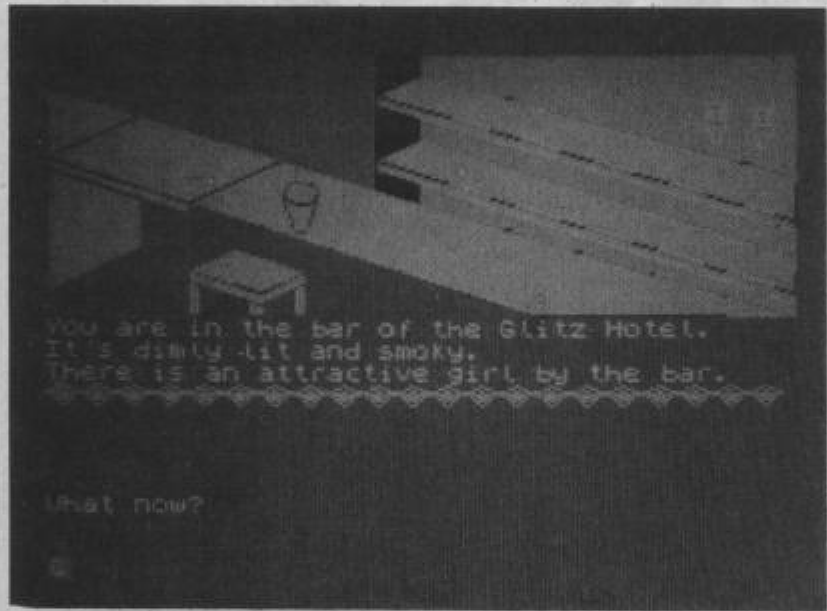
So much for the artificial flavouring, let's add some colour (or never mind the company, what about the game)?

If I said I once knew a posh chap whose name was Valkyrie, then surely you would fear the worst - that this review will amount to no more than the sort of jounalistic licence flaunted in the name of Colour Supplement entertainment. No, instead to that tardis-like tome, the Collins English Dictionary -

VALKYRIE, Walkyrie or Valkyr, n. Norse myth, any of the beautiful maidens who serve Odin and ride over the battlefields to claim the dead heroes by him or Tyr and take them to Valhalla.

Nothing of interest here..... I wonder if it's the seventeen?

If you're wondering what all the verbiage is, it's what I wrote while waiting for this game to load again. I wanted to know what happens if you say YES twice in succession to the question, 'For our records, please indicate if this is a pirate copy: Ans Y or N. ', which appears on a blank screen once the game has loaded. You might wonder why I did not answer NO, after all, it is quite a legal and respectable review copy. Ah yes, but you see, as a reviewer I must explore every avenue for the prosaic, and occasionally the unexpected, as in this case. So much for my



whimsical aberration, let's get down to this review and join me as I discover the game from scratch (because of the aforementioned prediliction).

'You are in the bar of the Glitz Hotel. It's dimly lit and smoky. There is an attractive girl at the bar. ' So begins *Valkyrie 17*, and a reasonably pleasant introduction it is too. Heading east I enter the ladies powder room and rather than do the honourable thing and turn right back, I stay just long enough to see the shower 'might be refreshing after a strenuous morning spent skiing. ' Skiing eh-umm?

To the north and east I find some snowshoes in the broom cupboard. Skiing; snowshoes? I suppose I must be in a skiing resort. At the entrance to the hotel the Manager won't let me leave until I've paid up, so I turn back towards the reception desk where the telephone never stops ringing - obviously a peculiar hotel. On one occasion i answer the phone to learn 'The Red Kipper flies at midnight'. I can only assume the bad line distorted the call from a local takeaway trying to entice customers away from the dubious hotel service - 'The Red Kipper fries till midnight'.

At reception I try to PAY BILL but I am unfamiliar with the currency (199 Grotniks?) and have long since dispensed with credit cards having lost all in a game of Snap. So what am I to do? Stuck in a hotel where the 'chambermaid appears and asks politely 'if you've been standing in a broom cupboard. She dusts you down and leaves'. So what if I had been standing in a broom cupboard? I wonder if I could slip out but no, the manager will not



VOTING FOR THE ADVENTURE CHART

The CRASH Adventure Chart has picked up considerably since we first introduced it, with more and more votes coming in every day! To make life easier for sorting, we are now providing a separate write-in form, so please use it for the Adventure Chart, and not the one included at the bottom of the Hotline details. If you are voting on both charts, you may send both forms together in the same envelope of course.

How to register your votes

There seems to have been some confusion in the minds of voters for the Adventure Chart, so to clarify the situations, here's how we do it. You may vote for **as many titles as you wish** (not just five as in the Hotline Chart) and you may award any of them points out of ten. So, for instance, you might vote for seven titles giving each of them ten points if you think they are worth it, or only three and give them one each. These votes are then added up for each title and the total is divided by the number of people who voted for the program resulting in an aggregate figure. From these figures, the top thirty adventure games are taken in descending order.

Phoned-in votes are accepted over the Hotline **(0584 3015)** in the same way (please state that you are voting for the Adventure Chart at the beginning), and may also be written in letter form without the use of the coupon if you prefer.

Adventure Chart Prize Draw

And don't forget that, like the Hotline Chart, you can win prizes! Each month we draw a winner from the voters, who receives £40 worth of software and a CRASH T-shirt, with four runners-up each getting a T-shirt and a mini-subscription to CRASH for three months.

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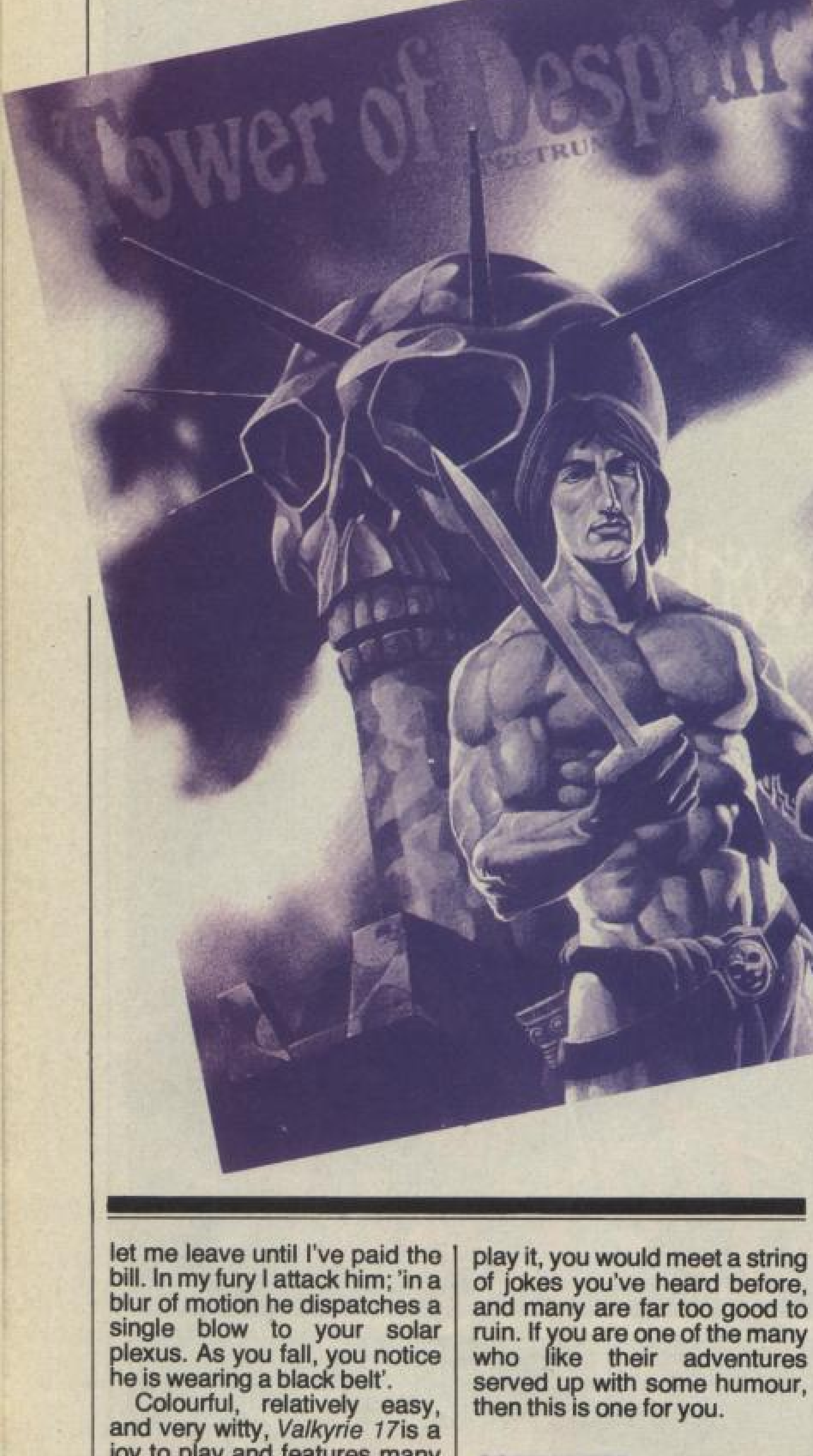
let me leave until I've paid the bill. In my fury I attack him; 'in a blur of motion he dispatches a single blow to your solar plexus. As you fall, you notice he is wearing a black belt'.

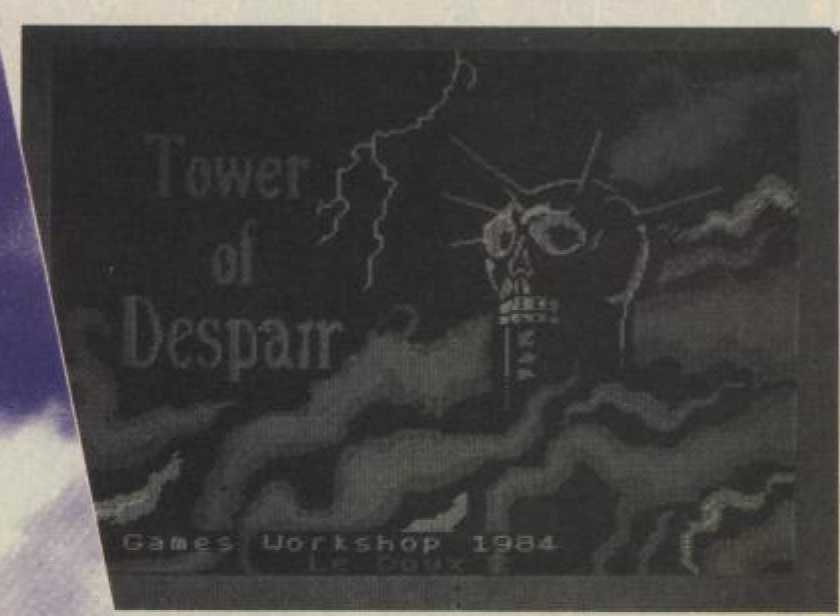
Colourful, relatively easy, and very witty, *Valkyrie 17*is a joy to play and features many good quality graphics. Its striking quality is the amazing depth of the humorous replies to whatever input you might come up with. The input routine is very certain and sure, and different tones of beeps draw your attention to when the program is ready for your input, or to an item present or a comment made. The layout of the screen is very attractive with a small 17 adjacent to your last input. During input type is spaced out for emphasis and condenses to normal spacing once entered. I didn't want to run through this game in detail as I so often do, otherwise, when you come to play it, you would meet a string of jokes you've heard before, and many are far too good to ruin. If you are one of the many who like their adventures served up with some humour, then this is one for you.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: quite easy
Graphics: on about half the locations, quite good
Presentation: very good
Input facility: good, limited to verb/noun
Response: a touch sluggish
Special features: random element, events can change
General rating: very humorous adventure

Atmosphere	**8**
Vocabulary	**8**
Logic	**8**
Debugging	**10**
Overall value	**8**





TOWER OF DESPAIR

Producer: **Games Workshop**
Retail price: £7.95
Author: **A. Clark, J. Thompson, S. Williams, M. McKeon**

Games Workshop have evolved from a long history in role-playing games, with milestones such as the *Fighting Fantasy Books* and *The Warlock of Firetop Mountain*, but have waited until now to release computer games as a software house in their own right. All the authors contribute to *White Dwarf* magazine and one might expect their experience among the plethora of Dungeons and Dragons offshoots to add that little extra something to the adventuring world, and in many ways this is indeed the case. Should you locate it in your computer shop you will find the case lavishly illustrated with the magical and the mystical. An adventure guide accompanies the two cassettes and contains the history and map of the realm of Aelandor, and vital clues actually within the pictures of the guide, a most welcome advance to adventuring.

The now familiar outline of the whys and wherefores that supply much substance for reviews naturally enough adorns the packaging here, but unlike many such narratives those for this game are more lucid and, what is more, reading it actually adds to the game giving information which is of some use in your quest. In short, it has been intelligently thought out so as to be consistent with the theme as a whole.

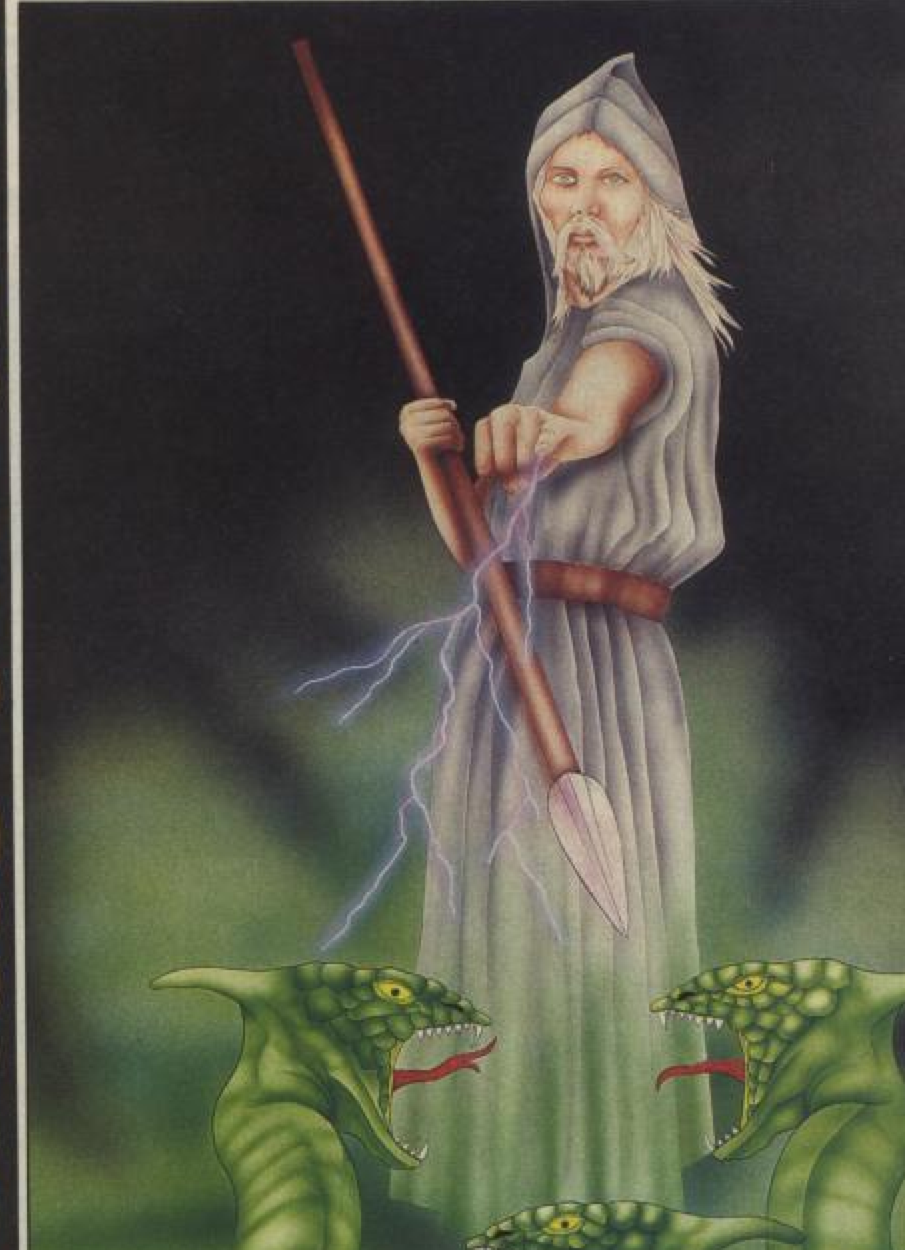
Malnor, Demonlord of Darkness, inhabits the Tower of Despair, amongst the Mountains of Undying Solitude, gathering evil forces about him by way of the Ring of Skulls, a wicked potent amulet. Legions of orc and demonkim await his command to infest the realm of Aelandor. You are the Warrior-Mage of Castle Argent, Keeper of the Silver Gauntlet and Wielder of Flamebolt, the Staff of Lightning Bolts. One summer morning, as you quietly work within Castle Argent, your Scrying Sphere brings you baleful news. Malnor is powerful again, so you must seek Ellwood in the Eastern Wilderness to retrieve the Golden Gauntlet.

You set off from the inner sanctum of Castle Argent, a place of contemplation and preparation. Only after going east and then back again are you told of the two visible items; the Silver Gauntlet and the Lightning Staff which, as

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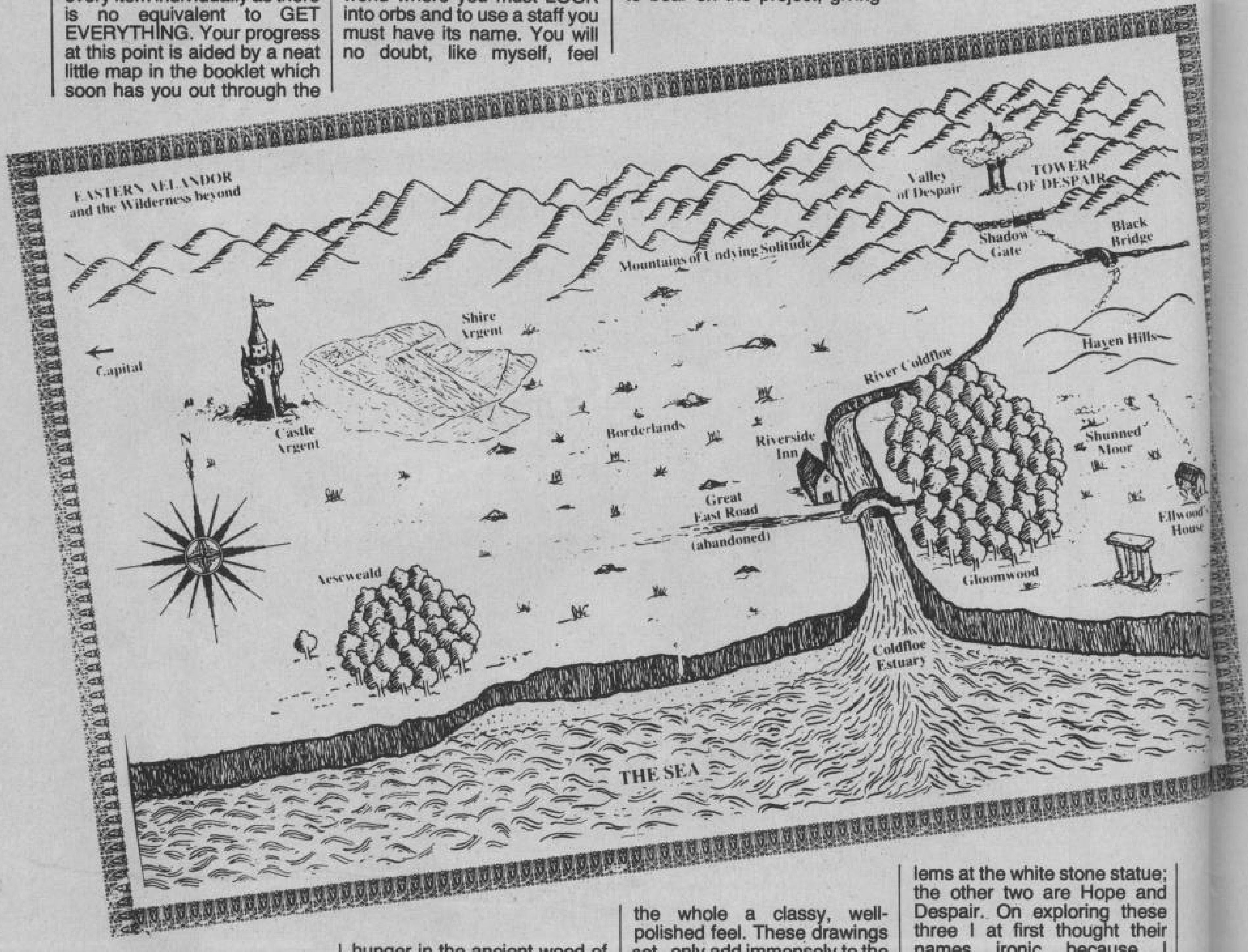
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you should now be aware, are very necessary for your mission. Equally important are the items to be found in the chest in the main hallway. 'Inside are; A long, fine coil of rope. A leathern canteen of water. A pack of dried field rations. An oil lantern'. Alas, you must GET every item individually as there is no equivalent to GET EVERYTHING. Your progress at this point is aided by a neat little map in the booklet which soon has you out through the



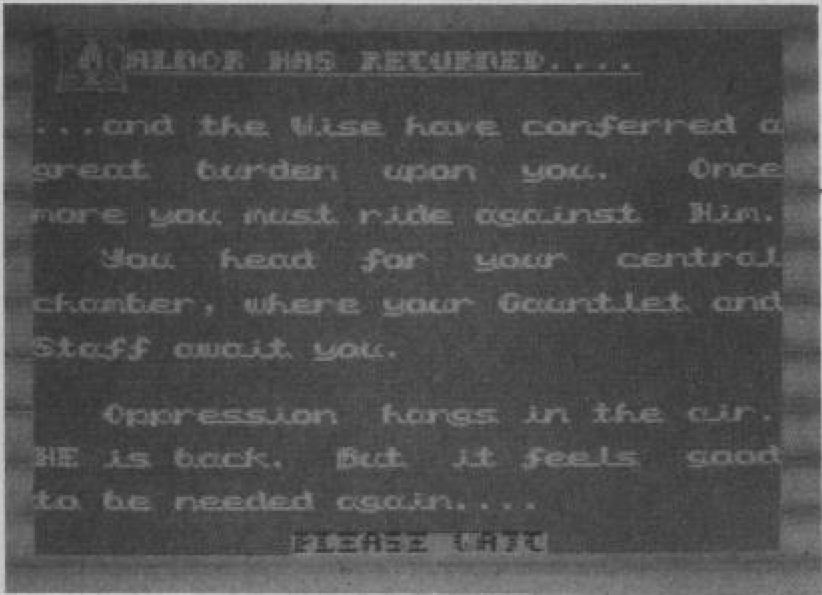
east gate with your mount Fiannabad amongst the familiar rolling downs of your native countryside. You hear the distant sound of flapping wings and you would be wise to hurry on your way lest you fall foul of the winged hordes that will certainly descend should you falter. You will know when you are safe as you will sense 'A supernatural howl of anger emanating from many leagues further east. The you feel a momentous shaking through the ground. Malnor is incensed by your escape from his agents!'

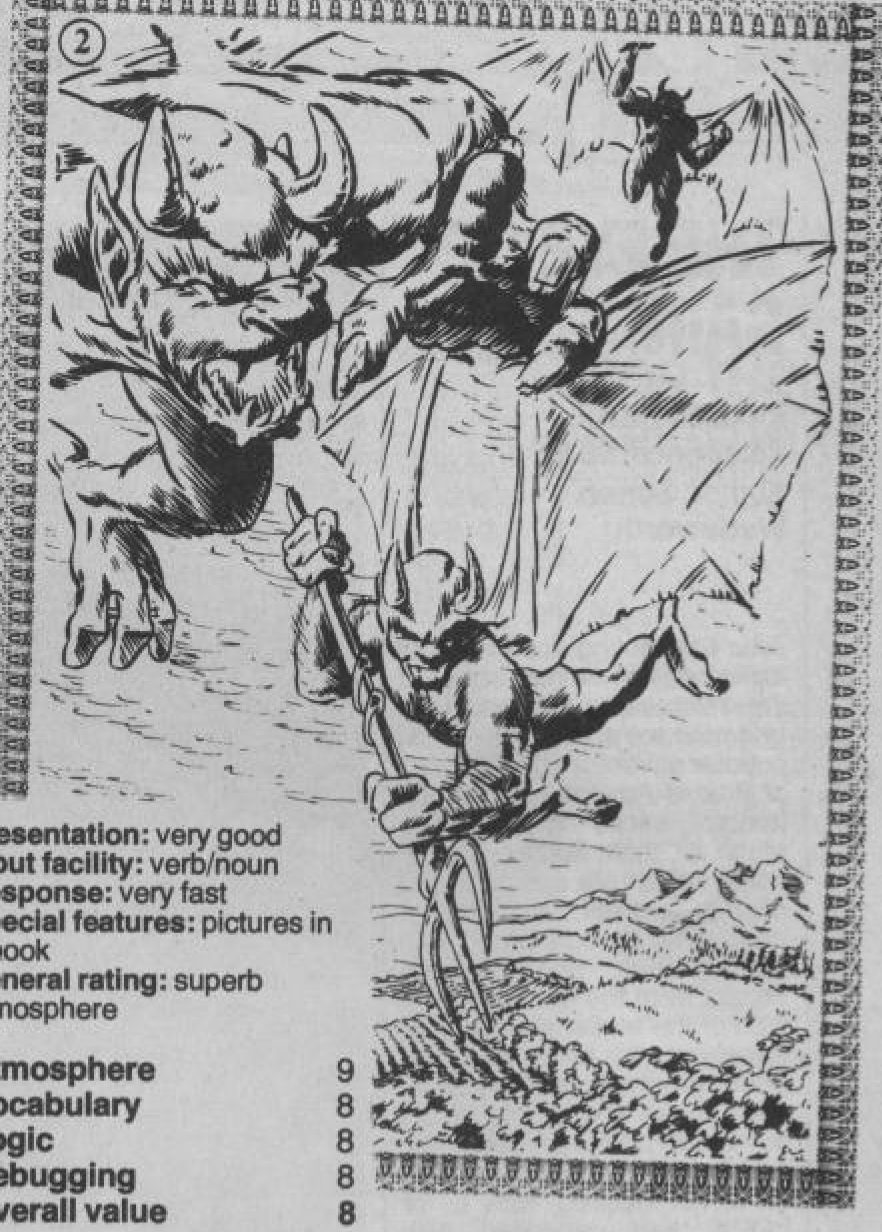
Any difficulties you may encounter at this stage may be related either to the vocabulary, which uses the construction ENTER (DOOR) frequently, or to the unfamiliar terminology of the fantasy world where you must LOOK into orbs and to use a staff you must have its name. You will no doubt, like myself, feel hunger in the ancient wood of Aesweald where you eat, otherwise each step will take you further towards starvation, death and a new game. If you are proceeding well you move north to meet some superbly crafted atmospheric descriptions. 'You are in a small glade, the vale of Tranquil Enlightenment. There is a sense of enchantment in the air. At the centre stands a white stone statue at whose base lies a pile of ashes'.

The spell of the program is cast not only with the well constructed, lengthy descriptions but also in their presentation; the character set is wonderfully redesigned in old world writing with ornate letters or symbols marking the beginning of each location description. This fine artistic talent also adorns the booklet where highly detailed and imaginative drawing in the style of *White Dwarf* is brought to bear on the project, giving the whole a classy, well-polished feel. These drawings not only add immensely to the pleasure derived from the game but are also a necessary part of it as within them lie clues to your progress. Perhaps the inability to examine or make use of all the objects in the drawings, just those that prove useful in some way, is more a reflection on the limits inherent in any computer adventure rather than a lack of insight on the part of the authors. An example is a picture in the booklet which you need once you've successfully negotiated the Door of Destiny. You see an innkeeper, and a ranger with a pouch full of arrows tied to his back but it is only the barrels in the corner that lead you deeper into the plot - the arrows cannot be collected.

The Door of Destiny is one of three such doors you meet once you've solved the problems at the white stone statue; the other two are Hope and Despair. On exploring these three I at first thought their names ironic because I despaired in Hope and was cheered in Despair, but once all the permutations became clear I found them apt enough.

The EXAMINE command is used often and its ramifications give rise to lengthy discourse. Through the Door of Destiny, and onto the inn, you find the body of the ranger is lying across the remains of the bar. 'His back is broken, and eyes stare out lifelessly from a face stricken with terror. From a chain around his neck hangs a delicately wrought silver locket.' A further EXAMINE leads you on even deeper into the





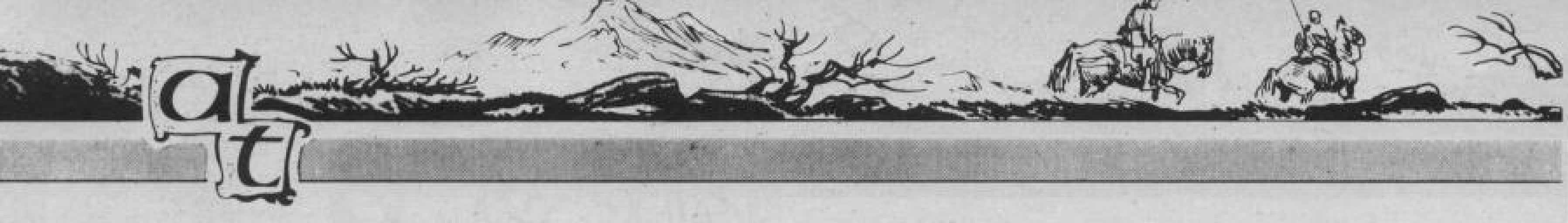
plot. 'Opening the locket you find an inscription written in the Old High Script, known in these days to but a few. The words inside are Peel Bark. ' For a Quilled game this adventure has some remarkably good, non-standard features.

The Tower of Despair is a Quilled text-only adventure. Were it not for the commendable acknowledgement on the packaging it would be almost impossible to prove that it had made use of the Quill. As such it is the best Quilled adventure I have yet seen, combining all the Quill's advantages with a startlingly original and fresh approach. Fantasy fans will love this game.

COMMENTS

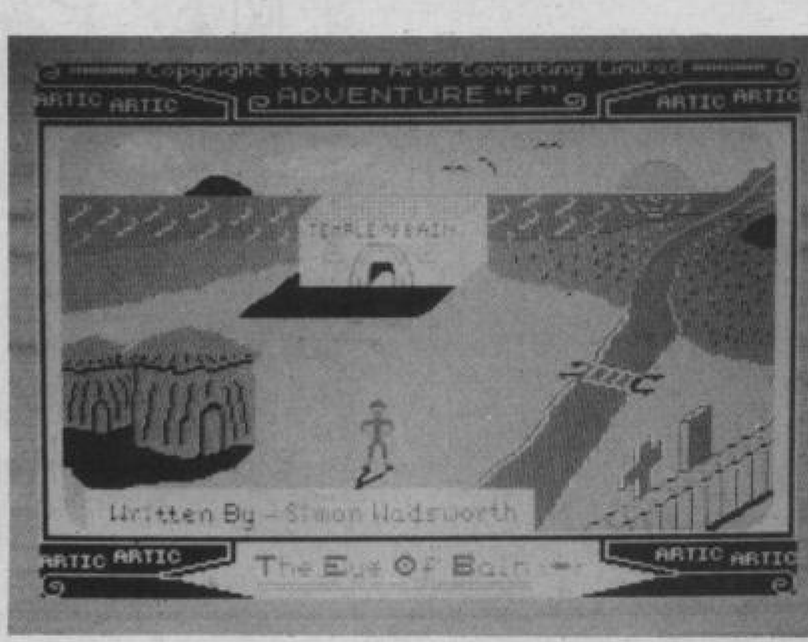
Difficulty: moderate
Graphics: none
Presentation: very good
Input facility: verb/noun
Response: very fast
Special features: pictures in a book
General rating: superb atmosphere

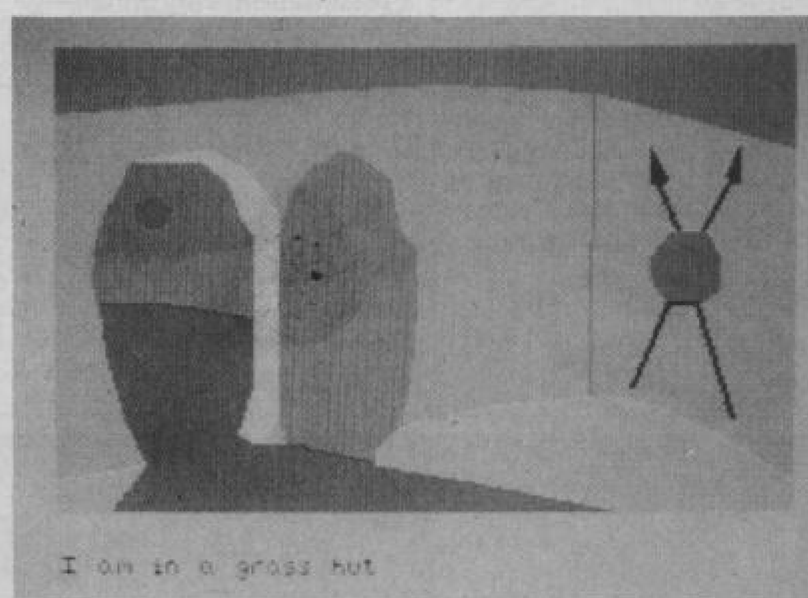
Atmosphere	9
Vocabulary	8
Logic	8
Debugging	8
Overall value	8



THE EYE OF BAIN

Producer: Artic
Retail price: £6.95
Author: Simon Wadsworth





Artic Computing are the most experienced adventurers in the microcomputer business and produce some of the most popular adventure games. *Eye of Bain* is Adventure F in their famous series and it says much of their lasting appeal when adventure mailbags still contain a great proportion of queries solely concerned with their games. *Eye of Bain* breaks from the text-only tradition of the earlier members of the series with full screen, colourful graphics at every location. These are simple so as not to hold up the proceedings, and further, are only switched on when desired with L for LOOK and cancelled with ENTER. Artic adventures take so long to play there is little time left to actually write the review.

You find yourself in a hut with no obvious release from your predicament but plenty around to keep you thinking.

This first problem strikes me as very Artic, either you solve the puzzle fairly quickly or you just give in - you don't even need the computer once you have digested the problem, as it is easily remembered, haunting you until it is solved. I suppose the idea is that one day you are sitting on the 25 bus and leap to your feet shouting, Eureka! I've got it! The annoying thing is - when you get home and load up - you haven't! You'll kick yourself when you do arrive at the solution as it requires no lateral thinking or intense brainstorming.

The vocabulary is verb/noun except for DRINK WATER which is not accepted while DRINK alone is. Strange. The input routine is as sure as it could possibly be and this programming competence adds tremendously to the slick professional feel of the game. Another feature which is indicative of Artic's vast experience is the invaluable GET ALL which smartly wraps up the first scene. GO or ENTER HOLE can be used to leave the hut but strangely GO HOLE won't take you back - GO HUT does. Shortly after, you enter the crossroads where it's best to be compassionate to the chap you find there. In return he says 'The blade and the hilt together do make, the downfall of the really big snake. ' Utter gibberish presently, this will no doubt make some sense later on.

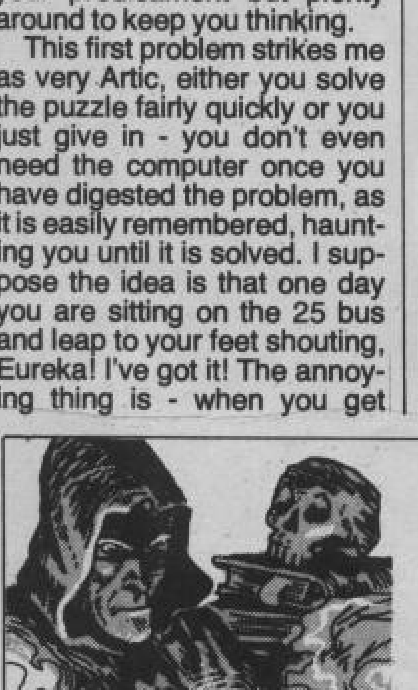
How to get free from your shackles is the first pressing problem after the hut. Very soon you run into the shapeless beast guarding a hole down a well, an ape up a tree whose usefulness is only realised later on, a pile of wood which, again, appears useless at first and, a very common problem in adventures, how to cross the desert without being fried to a fritter. One aspect that struck me as strange is the way in which the dense undergrowth at the well turned up nothing on examination. Is this a deliberate contrivance?

The Eye of Bain has a style and charm familiar to the thousands whose introductions to adventures was by playing the famous A-D Series. This latest addition, F, also displays fine graphics, making it a super adventure to play but, coming from Artic, difficult to play well.

COMMENTS

Difficulty: contains many ingenious and logical problems like all Artic games
Graphics: full screen on every location and quite good too
Presentation: average
Input facility: instantaneous
Response: limited to verb/noun
General rating: good value

Atmosphere	8
Vocabulary	7
Logic	8
Debugging	10
Overall value	8



ADVENTURE TRAIL REVIEW RATINGS

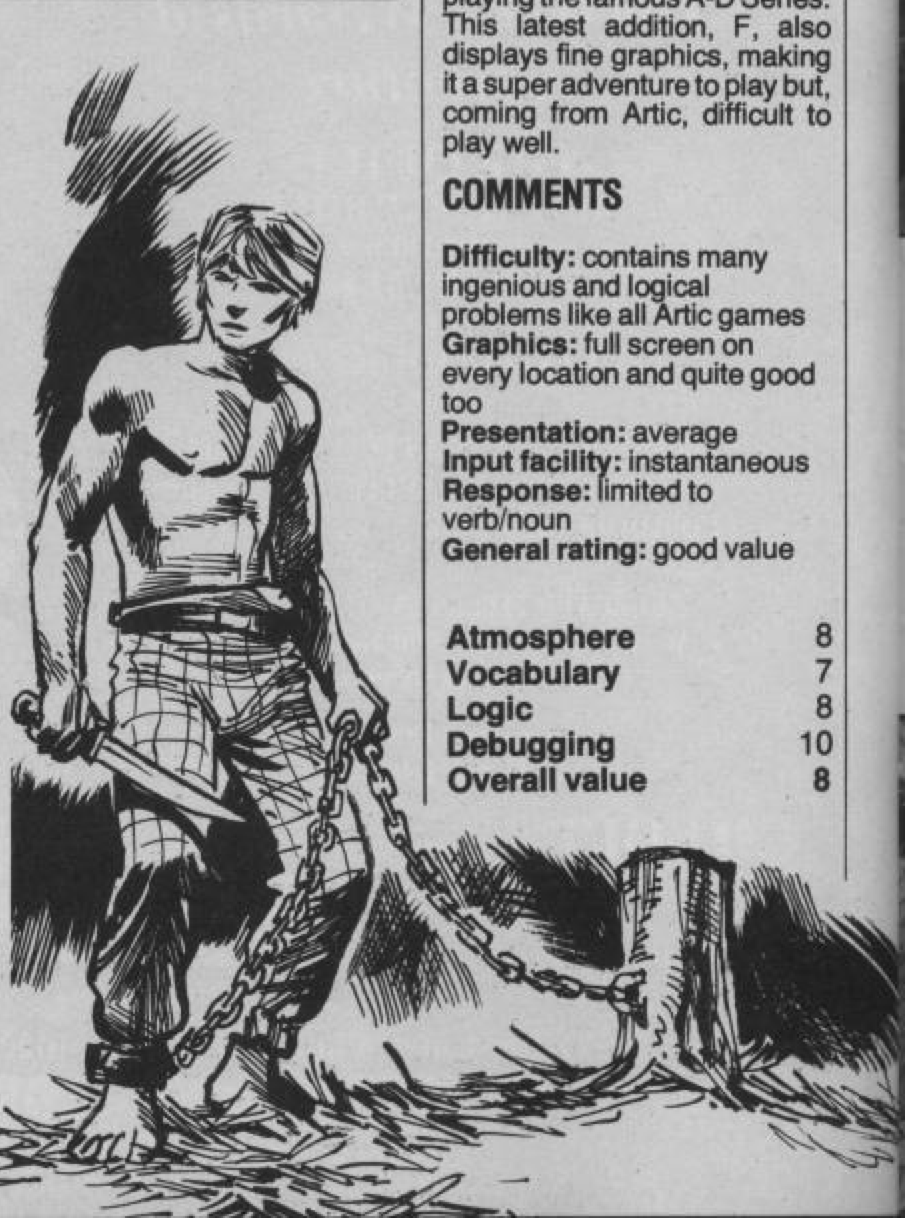
ATMOSPHERE: reflects quality of location description and graphics and how credibly characters behave.

VOCABULARY: the completeness of the vocabulary and friendliness of response. All words and associated words (objects etc) in location descriptions should be included.

LOGIC: reflects the logic of the problems encountered and whether or not you are likely to be killed without warning or chance of escape.

DEBUGGING: indicates the level of crashproofing. A program should not be crashed simply by making an incorrect entry or by pressing an unfortunate combination of keys.

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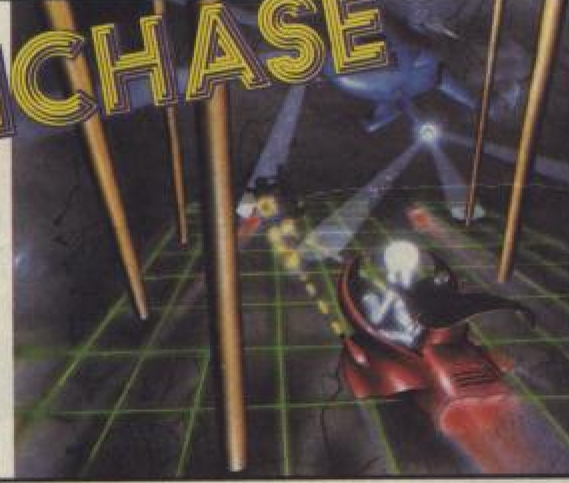
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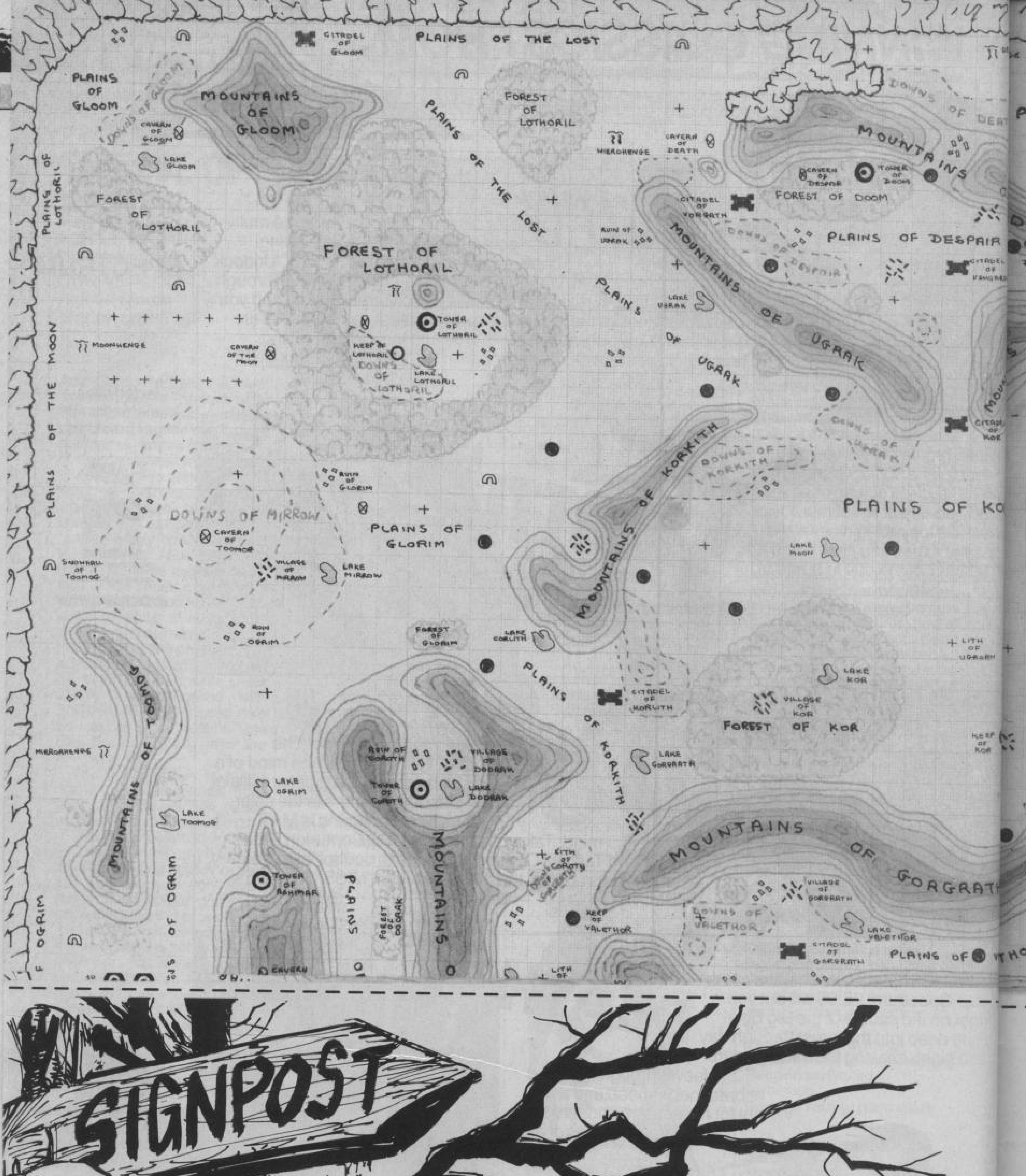
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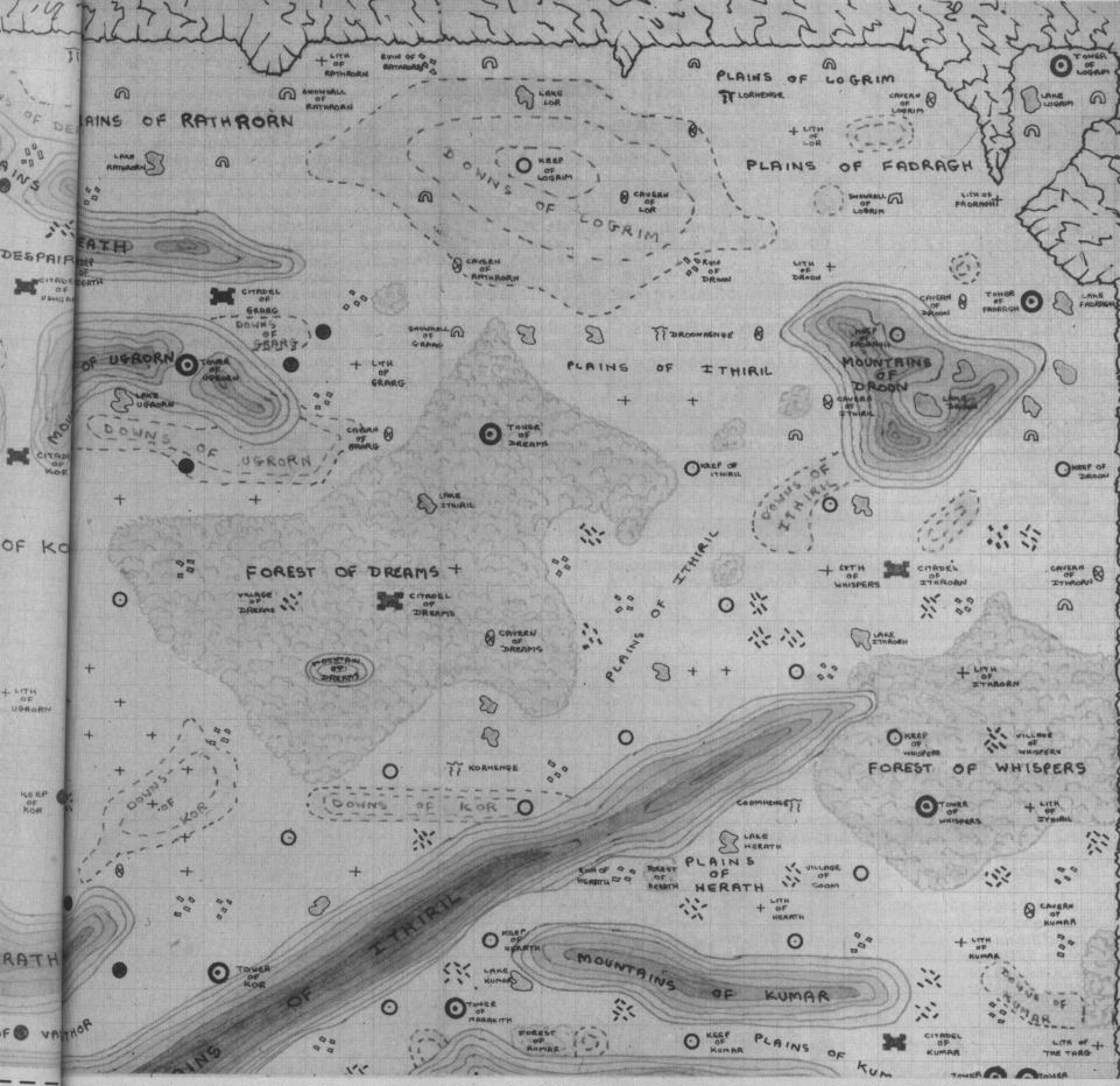
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LAKE CORLITH
LITH OF UGRORN
LAKE KOR
CITADEL OF KORLITH
PLAINS OF KORKITH
VILLAGE OF KOR
FOREST OF KOR
KEEP OF KOR
MOUNTAINS OF TOOMOG
MIRRORHENGE
RUIN OF COROTH
VILLAGE OF DODRAK
LAKE GORGRATH
TOWER OF COROTH
LAKE DODRAK
LAKE OGRIM
LAKE TOOMOG
MOUNTAINS OF GORGRATH
MOUNTAINS
TOWER OF RAHMAR
PLAINS
FOREST OF DODRAK
KEEP OF VALETHOR
DOWNS OF VALETHOR
VILLAGE OF GORGRATH
LAKE VALETHOR
CITADEL OF GORGRATH
PLAINS OF
PLAINS OF OGRIM



SIGNPOST



TOP HALF OF MAP FITS ONTO BOTTOM HALF ON PAGES 126/127



The map of the Land of Midnight on these four pages has been supplied by H. J. Douglas from Belfast, Northern Ireland. It's a pity we can't reproduce it in colour as it has been beautifully drawn and coloured on graph paper, with each square representing one move. The graph squares only show up faintly in our reproduction. For his efforts, Mr. Douglas is being sent £12 worht of software and a CRASH t-shirt.

As usual, to decode the tips in SIGNPOST simply rotate each letter backwards one place through the alphabet, eg. B becomes A, A becomes Z.

The Hobbit *is one of the all time classics and judging from the number of letters it still generates a great deal of interest. Many adventurers have written in with their hi-scores. One of the highest is from* **John Denton** *of Selby who writes:*

Could you tell me the highest percentage achieved on *The Hobbit*? I have had 92.5 but am now at a loss.

Actually John, I'd consider this something of a record and certainly deserves a place in the Hobbit Hall Of Fame. Of course, if anyone has beaten this score (on the Spectrum - over 100 is commonplace on other micros) I would like to hear from them.

I'm sure that by now most explorers will have found the golden cache, but has anyone found a use for it, or even been able to lift it up? If you have, I'm sure many readers will be interested to hear about it.

Warren Hamilton *of Enniskillen asks:*

How do you get the ring in *The Hobbit*, and also, how do you get past the king's cellar (the one with the barrels!)?

You find the ring in the goblin dungeon (sorry!) and you will need the ring in the cellar. You must: **XFBSJOH SJOH FOUFS BO FNQUZ CBSSFM BOE XBJU UP CF UISPXO JOUP UIF SJWFS**

Christopher Mitchell *of Stubbington, Hants is unable to get through the magic door in the Eleves' clearing. To do this:* **XFBS SJOH UIFO FYBNJOF EPPS TFWFSBM UJNFT** - this actually works for both directions.

Legend claim to have grossed over £2m from Valhalla; *it would be difficult to substantiate such a figure, but one thing is for certain, the game has caused many problems. For those still searching for the latter objects in this game* **Nicholas Cockshott** *provides some hints:*

Skalir leads to Felstrong from Asnir. Skornir is found 4 locations south of Rankle's residence. Grimnir is only found if you are in ecstasy.

A communique has been received from 'Xeroth the Firepriest' and 'Lord Falarance the Vain' which may be of help to other battle-torn warriors of Midnight:

When visiting certain keeps and citadels, Luxor and Corleth may recruit warriors to fight alongside them and travel with them (this is in addition to the various Lords that they may recruit). Corleth however, being Fey, may only recruit warriors of his own kind (which is not to say that he may not recruit Lords of the Free). For the sake of clarity, the Lords of the Fey are the following: Whispers, Dreams, Shadows, Dregrim, Thimrath, Korinel, Lothoril and Thrall.

As far as we have discovered, there are four methods of destroying the Ice Crown; these are as follows. Either take the Crown to Lake Mirrow, and wait for nightfall, or recruit Fawkrin the Skullkrin, Farlame the Dragonlord or Lorgrim the Wise, and take the Ice Crown to them. (Fawkrin the Skulkrin may be found at Moonhenge, which is Northwest of the Downs of Mirrow; Lorgrim the Wise may be found in his Tower, which is Northeast of the Tower of Fadrath, but as to the location of Farflame the Dragonlord, we have no idea and would be grateful to hear from anyone who has found him).

As for general tips; it is worth noting that the warriors apparently tire more easily than riders (although the warriors of the Fey seem strangely resilient) and this should be borne in mind when moving your forces to a new rendezvous; Doomdark's forces move surprisingly quickly, and it is all too easy to find a large number of your troops in battle, while half your intended army lies totally exhausted some ten leagues away! Judicious use of the Lakes should prevent this unfortunate occurance, however, as every lake contains a draught of the Waters of Life, which should refresh even the most fatigued army. Care should be taken, though, as each lake may be used only once.

After many harrowing defeats, we have finally managed to defeat Doomdark's armies at Ushgarak with the following tactics; We divided our available forces roughly in half, with half the force to remain in the Citadel of Xajorkith (remember, one of the victory conditions for Doomdark is to take the city), and the other half heading at an unhurried pace (forced marches can be extremely hard on your troops - read Stephen Donaldson's *The Illearth War* for more details) towards the Citadel of Ushgarak recruiting other, fresh troops on their way. Morkin's quest appears to fail more often than not, and it is probably more important to concentrate on a military victory, although it does seem to make a difference if he travels along the western edge of the map as far as possible, and hence remain hidden from Doomdark's forces by the Mountain Ranges.

Back to answering some adventure queries. **Brian Longstaff** *of Sheffield writes;*

In *Mountains of Ket* I can't get past the Dragon (although I've a feeling I'm missing a simple solution here)!

This problem is made much more difficult by only having one attempt before being killed. Try **QPVS PJM** *if you have it!*

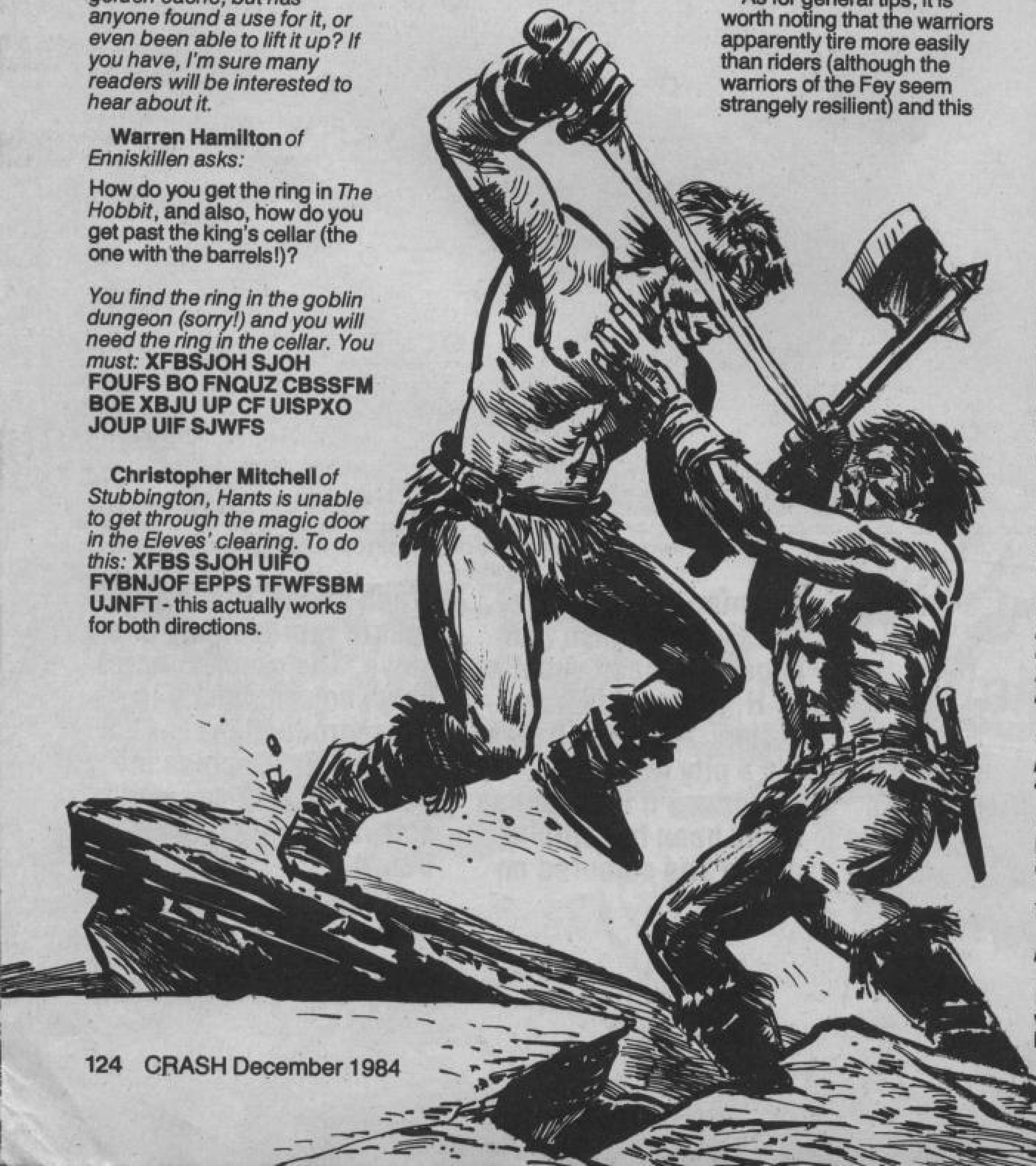
Mr. J Lockerby *of Canterbury is having problems with* Lords of Time *and writes:*

I managed to enter the clock but no matter what I type in I can't get started.

Try **TXJOH QFOEVMVN**

Andrew Taylor *of New Malden, Surrey writes:*

I have been having difficulty with a game called *Colditz* by Phipps Associates. It is a



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brilliantly designed game, but it is a little too hard for me! I have succeeded in killing the Watch Tower Guard and commiting suicide on an electric fence, but how do you; 1) fix the silencer on the gun; 2) get past the electric fence; 3) get back through the window once outside?

To fix the silencer to the gun try **GJU TJMFODFS**. *I'm afraid the electric fence is a dead end which cannot be passed. To re-enter the room once outside the window simple enter CLIMB IN.*

Raymond Harrison *has been having difficulty with* Fantasia Diamond *and asks:*

How do you kill the Guardian? How do you open the secret door? How do you open the brown door?

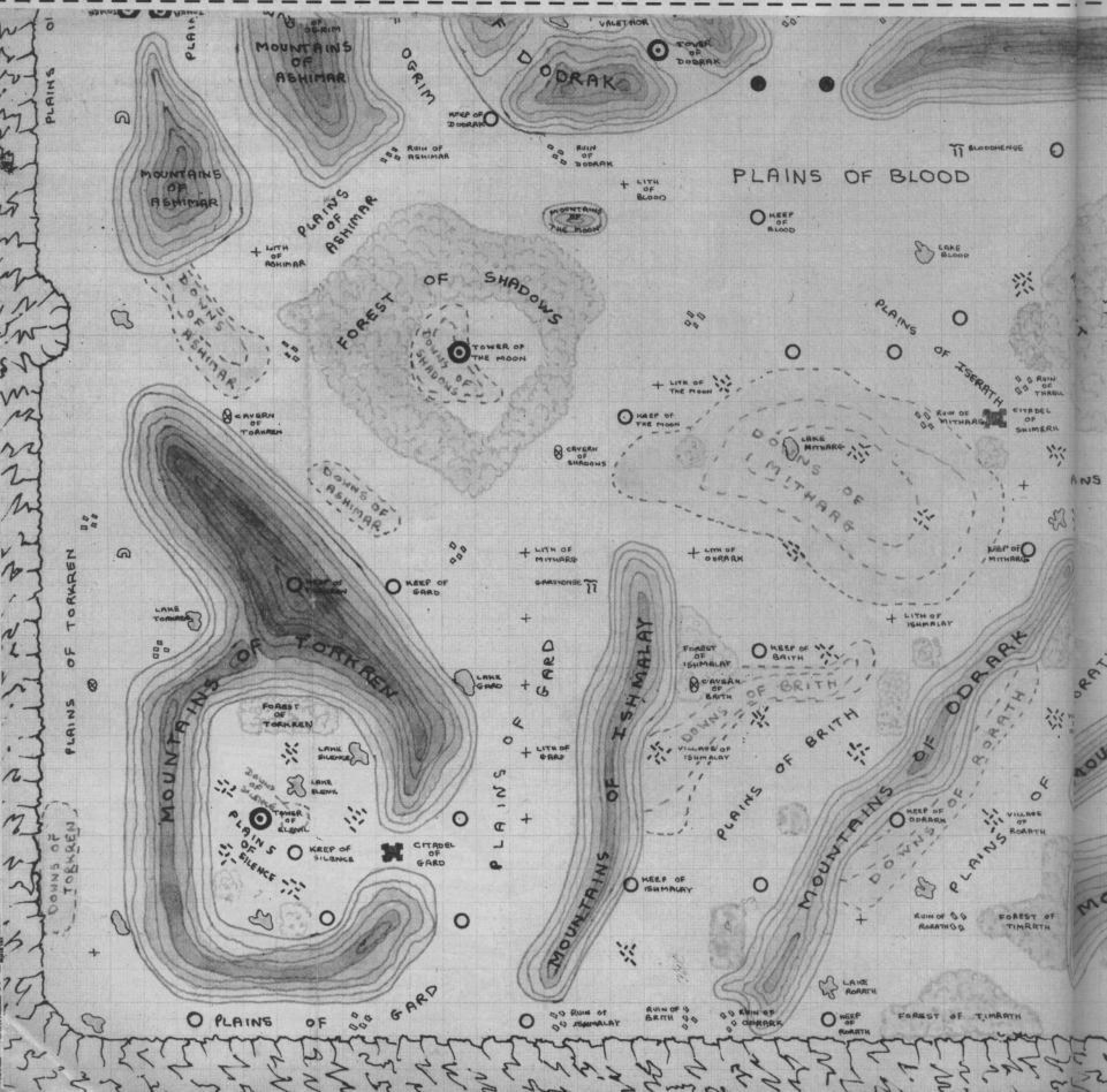
I tend to think the Guardian should be avoided rather than killed. As for the secret door you will probably need the key. The solution for the brown door, I think, is rather clever, try **LOPDL PO EPPS**.

Finally, is there anyone who could help **Neil Talbott** *from Bromsgrove, Worcs. who is having difficulty with the little known adventure* Demon Lord, *with which I am not familiar. Neil is unable to get beyond the green door in the first part of the game.*

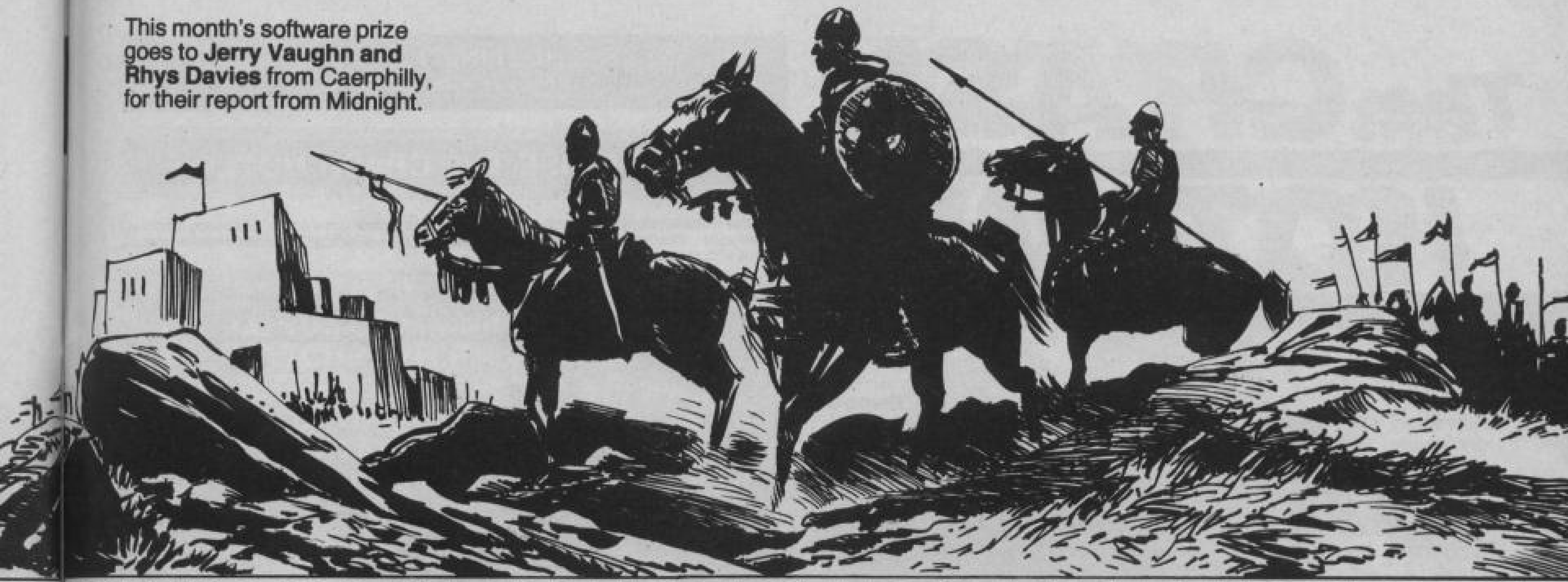
The most common backdrop for adventure games is the fantasy setting. Many reviewers now see the games as boring and unimaginative and hence review games accordingly.

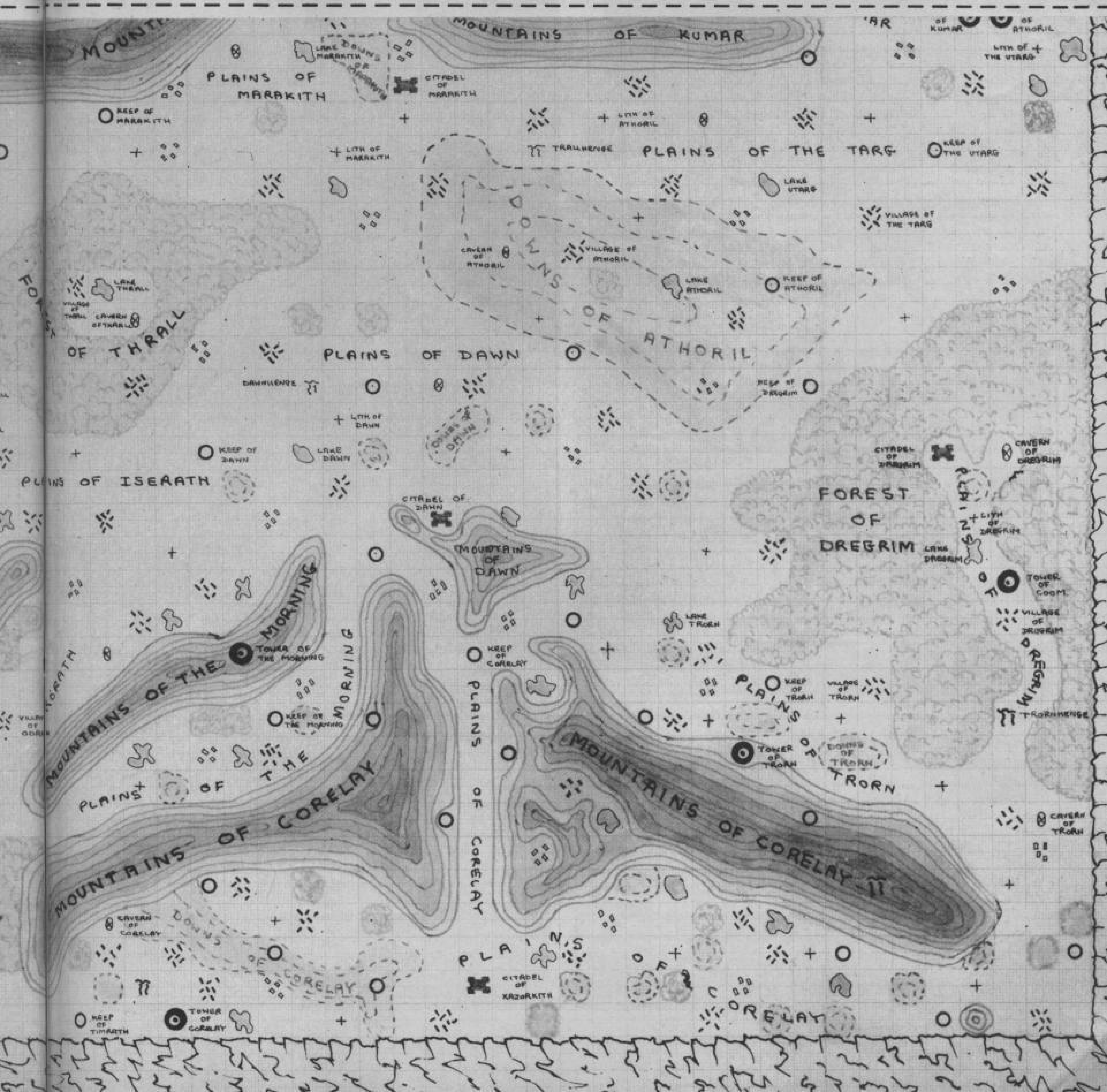
Do you have a favourite setting for adventure like fantasy, space, historical etc. , or unusual and highly original themes as in Urban Upstart, Denis Through the Drinking Glass *and* Hampstead? *Do let me know because this could be your chance to influence the development of adventures and maybe even the thoughts of some reviewers - and remember, each month £12 worth of software goes to the most interesting letter.*





This month's software prize goes to **Jerry Vaughn and Rhys Davies** from Caerphilly, for their report from Midnight.





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Use the coupon below, making sure you fill in all the details. Pop the coupon in an envelope and send it to us. Alternatively you may send a letter if you don't want to cut up the mag.

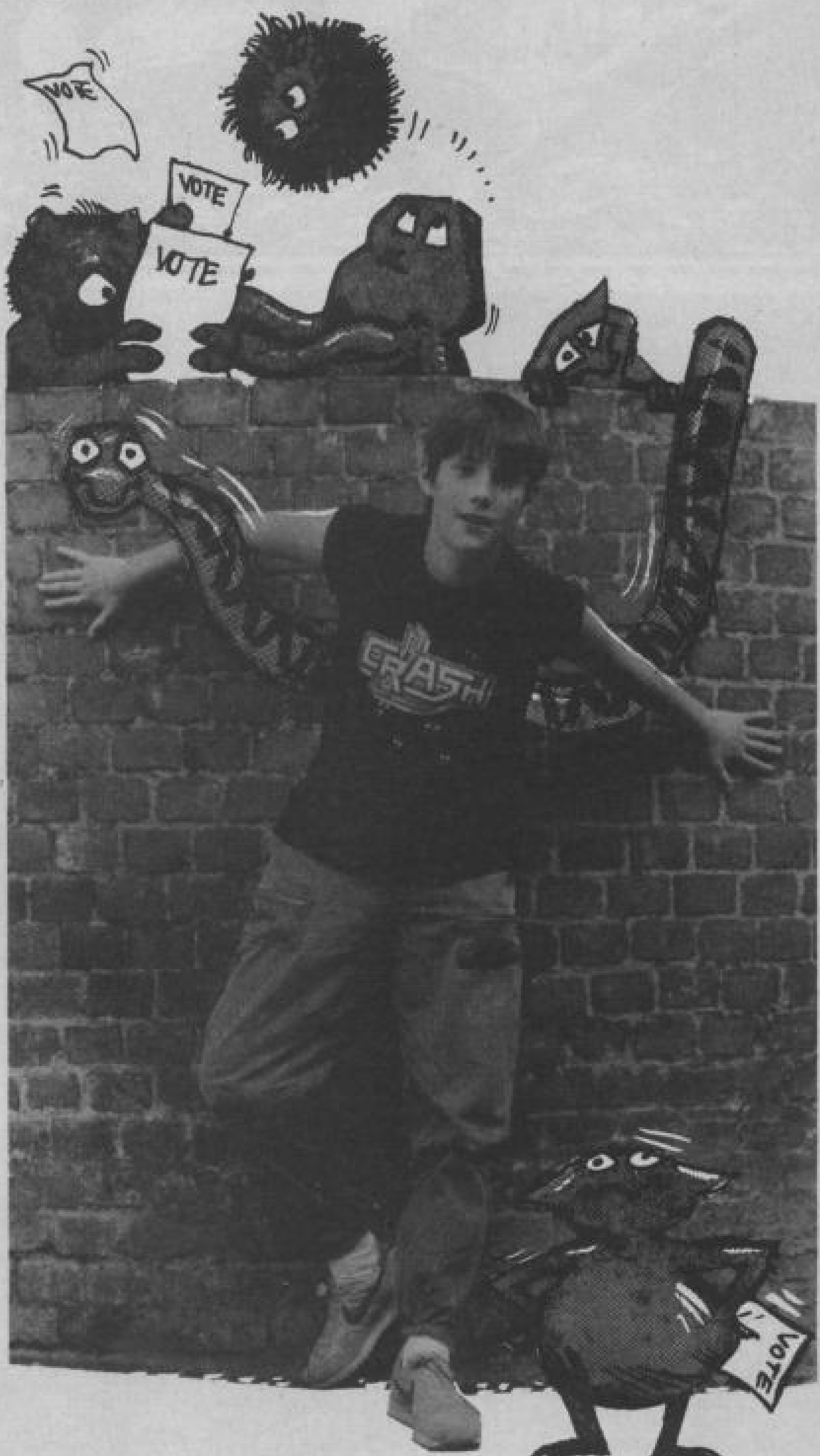
The telephone Hotline is getting very jammed after a new issue comes out, so bear with us if it's engaged. If all else fails – write in!

This month's HOTLINE winner is **S.Ellwood** Hawarden, Deeside, Clwyd. The four runners-up are; **Ian Lyon**, Kidderminster, Worcs.; **Derek Buckle**, Ipswich, Suffolk; **Darren White**, Gateshead, Tyne & Wear; and **Paul Granby**, Northwich, Cheshire.

The Adventure Chart winner this month is **Gordon Strachan**, Sittingbourne, Kent. The four runners-up are; **Farley Stollick**, Egham, Surrey; **A. Taylor**, Worksop, Notts; **Robert Graham**, London NW11; and **Simon Ward**, Kingston, Nr. Lewes, E. Sussex.

Not many surprising changes at the top this month, just a few slight reshuffles here and there, but the biggest jumper (naturally) is *Daley Thompson's Decathlon*, in at 7 from 16. *Monty Mole* makes another big jump, up 12 places to this month's number 10 slot. The mid-range of the chart also remains fairly stable, but two newcomers in the twenties with *Pyjamarama* in at 25, and *Kokotoni Wilf* in two places lower. The other two new arrivals are *The Legend of Avalon* which appears at 44, and the arcade horror *Frank N Stein* in at 48.

The Adventure Chart is still leaping about a bit, with a few 'oldies' appearing in the lower areas. The only big change at the top is the astonishing reappearance of *Circus* straight in at number 6. Lower down *Colossal Adventure* comes in again at 16, while **Phipps Associates'** *Magic Mountain* reappears . A strange thing is that **Gilsoft's** *The Quill* has remained steadily in the HOTLINE CHART, but has never been voted for in the Adventure Chart.



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Whether you phone or write in, all names go into the voluminous bag to be drawn monthly. First out receives **£40 worth of software** plus a CRASH tee shirt, and the five runners-up receive three issues of CRASH free plus a CRASH tee shirt.

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My top five favourite programs in descending order are:

TITLE	PRODUCER
1	
2	
3	
4	
5	

CRASH HOTLINE

TOP 50 FOR DECEMBER

(Figures in parenthesis indicate last month's position)

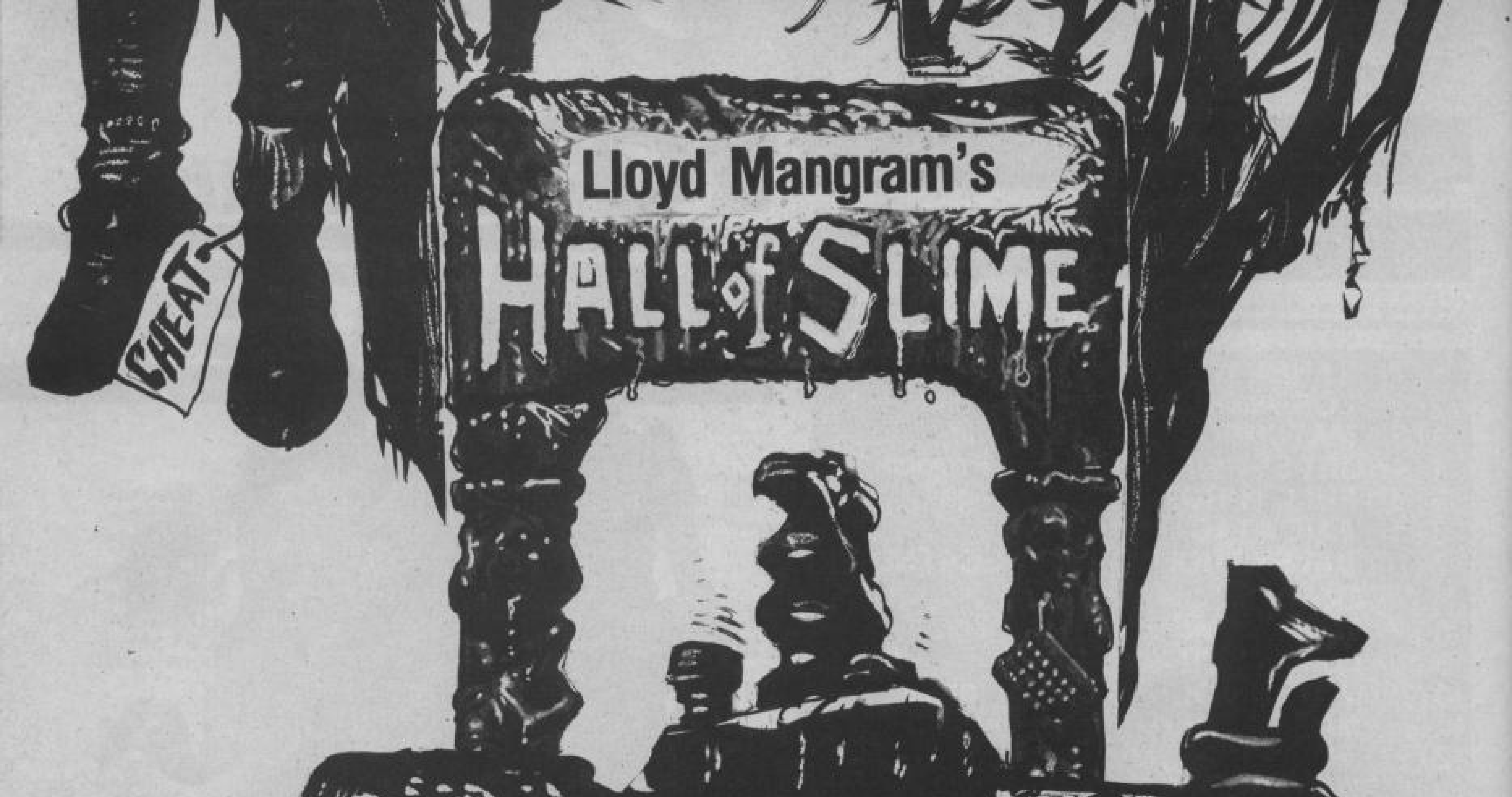
1 (1) **SABRE WULF** Ultimate
2 (2) **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
3 (3) **MATCHPOINT** Psion/Sinclair
4 (4) **JET SET WILLY** Software Projects
5 (6) **FULL THROTTLE** Micromega
6 (5) **ATIC ATAC** Ultimate
7 (16) **DALEY THOMPSON'S DECATHLON** Ocean
8 (7) **CODE NAME MAT** Micromega
9 (8) **LUNAR JETMAN** Ultimate
10 (22) **MONTY MOLE** Gremlin Graphics
11 (10) **MANIC MINER** Software Projects
12 (9) **MOON ALERT** Ocean
13 (11) **TLL** Vortex
14 (15) **AUTOMANIA** Mikro-Gen
15 (12) **WHEELIE** Microsphere
16 (14) **CHUCKIE EGG** A&F Software
17 (13) **KOSMIC KANGA** Micromania
18 (17) **TRASHMAN** New Generation
19 (18) **ANTICS** Bug-Byte
20 (20) **PSYTRON** Beyond
21 (19) **WORSE THINGS HAPPEN AT SEA** Silversoft
22 (21) **HOBBIT** Melbourne House
23 (23) **STOP THE EXPRESS** Sinclair
24 (27) **AD ASTRA** Gargoyle Games
25 (--) **PYJAMARAMA** Mikro-Gen
26 (31) **DEATHCHASE** Micromega
27 (--) **KOKOTONI WILF** Elite
28 (30) **BEACH-HEAD US** Gold
29 (28) **SCUBA DIVE** Durell
30 (26) **POGO** Ocean
31 (24) **HULK** Adventure International
32 (34) **FOOTBALL MANAGER** Addictive Games
33 (25) **FACTORY BREAKOUT** Poppy Soft
34 (33) **THE QUILL** Gilsoft
35 (29) **ANT ATTACK** Quicksilva
36 (32) **JETPAC** Ultimate
37 (37) **ANDROID 2** Vortex
38 (40) **CAVELON** Ocean
39 (41) **FIGHTER PILOT** Digital Integration
40 (36) **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
41 (35) **PYRAMID** Fantasy
42 (43) **NIGHT GUNNER** Digital Integration
43 (39) **DOOMSDAY CASTLE** Fantasy
44 (--) **THE LEGEND OF AVALON** Hewson Consultants
45 (42) **MUGSY** Melbourne House
46 (38) **PSSST** Ultimate
47 (45) **FRED** Quicksilva
48 (--) **FRANK N. STEIN** P. S. S.
49 (44) **ZZOOM** Imagine
50 (46) **CHEQUERED FLAG** Psion

VOTE for the CHARTS



CRASH ADVENTURE CHART

1 (2) **SHERLOCK** Melbourne House
2 (1) **LORDS OF MIDNIGHT** Beyond
3 (6) **LORDS OF TIME** Level 9 Computing
4 (4) **THE HOBBIT** Melbourne House
5 (5) **HULK** Adventure International
6 (--) **CIRCUS** Channel 8
7 (8) **WAYDOR** I M S
8 (11) **URBAN UPSTART** Shepherd
9 (3) **SNOWBALL** Level 9 Computing
10 (9) **VELNOR'S LAIR** Quicksilva
11 (15) **ORACLE'S CAVE** Dorcas Software
12 (16) **VALHALLA** Legend
13 (10) **INVINCIBLE ISLAND** Shepherd
14 (18) **SHIP OF DOOM** Artic
15 (13) **QUEST FOR THE HOLY GRAIL** Dream Software
16 (--) **COLOSSAL ADVENTURE** Level 9 Computing
17 (14) **GOLDEN APPLE** Artic
18 (19) **MOUNTAINS OF KET** Incentive
19 (21) **INCA CURSE** Artic
20 (29) **KNIGHT'S QUEST** Phipps Associates
21 (17) **PLANET OF DEATH** Artic
22 (12) **ESPIONAGE ISLAND** Artic
23 (--) **MAGIC MOUNTAIN** Phipps Associates
24 (22) **MAD MARTHA** Mikro-Gen
25 (--) **SMUGGLERS COVE** Quicksilva
26 (--) **McKENSIE** Software Projects
27 (30) **GREEDY GULCH** Phipps Associates
28 (26) **QUEST** Hewson Consultants
29 (27) **TEN LITTLE INDIANS** Channel 8
30 (28) **MESSAGE FROM ANDROMEDA** Interceptor



Lloyd Mangram's HALL of SLIME

Stand by for the Christmas Special 'VALLEY OF SLIME' - a mammoth swamp of creepy hi-scores - a feature so packed with sickening boasts that it will make any alien cringe!

Anyway, enough of the hype, back to the more normal everyday stuff. . .

Sabre Wulf 272, 200 at 100 **Cavelon** 38, 800 **Deathchase** 83, 330 **Pheenix** 29, 410 **Paul Ledger (15), Leeds**

Jetpac 93, 275 (without cheating) **Zzoom** 143, 480 and 244 refugees **Sabre Wulf** 87, 300 at 70 **Chuckie Egg** 151, 350 on L17 **Lunar Jetman** 102, 750 **Pyramid** 107, 584 **TLL** 36, 207 **Ant Attack** 45, 280 and 10 victims **Si Jaffa, Edgebaston, Birmingham**

Sabre Wulf 1, 036, 435 at 100 **Full Throttle** 40.11, 1st at Silverstone **Chuckie Egg** 579, 390 on L40 **Sabre Wulf** lowest completed score - can anyone beat this? 55, 605 at 47 **Christopher Hawkins (16), Coningsby, Lincoln**

CDS Pool 3, 350 on 10th frame **Full Throttle** 1st in Spain and 10.93 ahead of 2nd **Fred** 39, 750 on L5 **A. Cornwall, Thornton, Cleveleys, Lancs.**

Daley Thompson's Decathlon day 1 - 303, 375; day 2 - 404, 059 (high jump and hurdles respectively) **Factory Breakout** 34, 445 on Epsilon **Pyramid** 116, 506 completed **Hobbit** completed **Chequered Flag** Brands Hatch 1.18:26 **ZX Golf** round of 61 (9 under par) **Meteroid Storm** 51, 020 **Horaces** Hungry - 3, 790; Skiing - 1, 705; Spiders - 4, 000 **Pogo** 52, 950 **Stephen Stavely(17), Bridlington, E. Yorks** *I'm saving the full details of Stephen's Decathlon scores until Christmas* **LM**

Zzoom 140, 110 **Digger Dan** 6, 850 **Rommel's Revenge** 22, 500 **Caterpillar** 53, 888 **Orbiter** 149, 700 **Deathchase** 207, 941 on L32 **Pheenix** 47, 480 **Chuckie Egg** 239, 110 **Wild West Hero** 82, 075 **Chequered Flag** Silverstone: 1.05:70; Paul Ricard 1.20:76; Brands Hatch 1.13:94; Monaco 1.47:66; Psion Park 1.33:48; Micro Drive 0.54:30; Cambridge Ring 0.50:72; Osterreichring 1.10:50; Monza 1.03:52; Saturn Sands 1.19:04 **Full Throttle** all first at - Donnington by 23:42; San Marino 03:30; Spain 10:25; France 11:27; W. Germany 01:57; Italy 03:46; Silverstone 03:30; Belgium 10:81; Yugoslavia 11:82; Sweden 04:43 **Kevin Howson, Kendall, Cumbria**

TLL 209, 444 on L79 and 395 dots **Zzoom** 101, 910 **Orc Attack** 60, 596 **Ian Stringman, Borscough, Lancs.**

Pssst 75, 505 **Darren Hayman(12), Maidstone, Kent**

Pheenix 49, 120 **Meteor Storm** 260, 000 **Tranz-Am** 40, 180 and 38 cups **Zip Zap** 1, 958 phase 16 **Zzoom** 107, 620 after 11 attacks **Stop the Express** 8, 010 **Moon Alert** 136, 800 **Pssst** 30, 000 **Hunchback** over 100, 000 **Transversion** 25, 000 **Pogo** 63, 150 **Julian Frank(13), Norwich, Norfolk**

Sabre Wulf 181, 630 **Atic Atac** 2.49 **Douglas Kyle**

Lunar Jetman 227, 640 on

Starblitz 775, 775 on wave 46 **Invasion of the Body Snatchas** 9, 990 on wave 9 **Galaxians - Artic** 99, 980 **Jetpac** 167, 000 **Pogo** 73, 000 **Moon Alert** Level N **Ant Attack** 42, 000 **Andrew Kyle** and more to follow

Decathlon day 1 - 309, 438 **Chequered Flag** Cambridge Ring 48:40; Silverston 52:00 **Kenneth Kyle - the family from Retford, Notts.**

Well that's all there's room for this month - watch out for the bumper bundle in the Christmas Special, out on December 13th.

Lloyd Mangram

PLAYING TIPS

My Playing Tips file is just bulging, and it's getting harder to know what to print! Fortunately a lot of material tends to repeat itself, so if you have sent in some golden nugget of wisdom which you see credited to another person, please don't feel affronted - sometimes it's just the luck of the draw as to who's first out of the file. Any tips for Lords of Midnight get handed onto Derek Brewster to prevent my job loss!

This month we have a map of Gremlin Graphics' *Wanted: Monty Mole*, which has been prepared by the long suffering POKEs and Screen Photography Department of CRASH in conjunction with Oliver Frey (and a cast of thousands)!

So, here we go again, first off with a silly tip for. . .

PENETRATOR

If you go into the Landscape Editor mode you can make the land disappear. First press 2 so you can edit Level 2 onwards, and go back with the cursor to just before the hill with many radar towers on it. Then press Caps Shift and T to set top level of the landscape, then go back and set the bottom level of the landscape exactly on the top level using Caps Shift and B - and lo and behold, the land disappears!

You can do this on all the levels except level 1. If you want to edit level 5, you first take all the rockets and radar towers from level 4 starting from the one closest to level 5. Making the land disappear in this way, you can just put boxes on the screen here and there, which is quite effective.

In *JSW*, don't believe everything people say - there are no extra screens in which you get taken off on a boat from THE BOW at 11.45 - it's a load of b*******t.

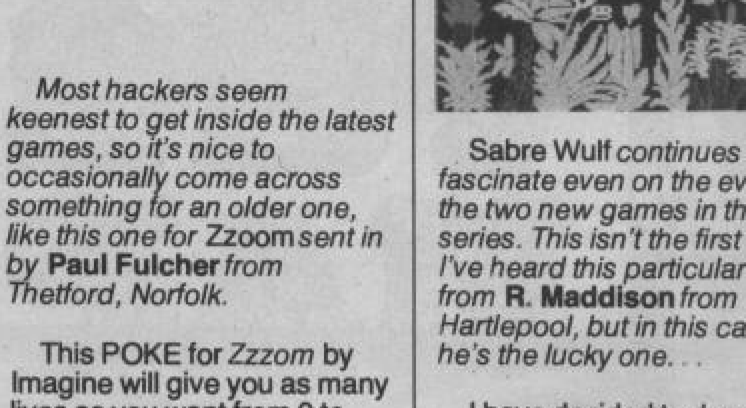
Antony Samson, Rayleigh, Essex.

Well I think your Penetrator *tip is simply fascinating, Antony, and after all, it must make it so easy to score! But what exactly are the boxes for?*

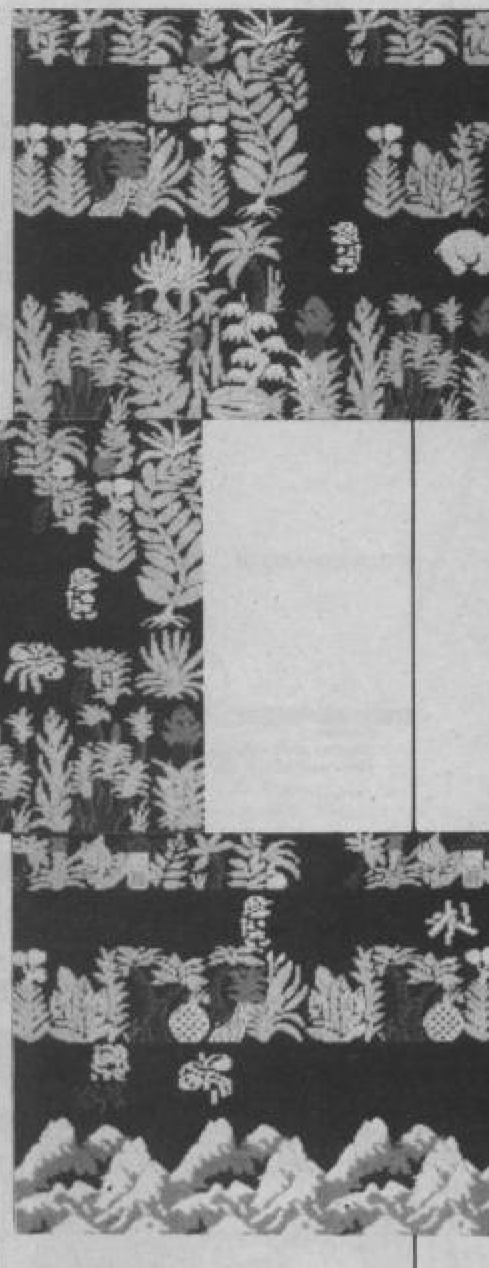
Most hackers seem keenest to get inside the latest games, so it's nice to occasionally come across something for an older one, like this one for Zzoom sent in by **Paul Fulcher** *from Thetford, Norfolk.*

This POKE for *Zzzom* by Imagine will give you as many lives as you want from 0 to 255. This is done by typing **MERGE** (enter), start the tape and when OK report, stop tape and list program. Edit the line containing **PRINT USR** statement and add **POKE 25131, n** (n = number of lives up to 255). Then **RUN** and enter and start the tape again.

When the game has finished loading you will find that you have the number of lives you wanted.



As I've said before, there is usually no time to check any of these POKEs out beforehand, so be it on your own heads if you use them!





Sabre Wulf *continues to fascinate even on the eve of the two new games in the series. This isn't the first time I've heard this particular tip from* **R. Maddison** *from Hartlepool, but in this case he's the lucky one. . .*

I have decided to donate my talents (apparently I have got some somewhere) to add to the endless playing tips for *Sabre Wulf*. You will, no doubt, have noticed that if you stay in one room for a long time, a ball of fire apears and comes after you. Well did you know that if you can stay on that screen for about thirty seconds it goes out and you get a big bonus. Well go out of the first screen of the game, turn right and go into the dead end; keep your sword out so if the hippo comes you can chase it away. The flame will appear in the other room and eventually it wil go out, leaving you with a big bonus.

There now follows what sounds to me like a very dubious tip indeed, but I print it to give the writer, **Paul Atkinson**, *the benefit of the doubt. Paul is from Crosby, Liverpool.*

PLAYING TIPS



On *Monty Mole* it is possible to get into the Miner's house. You do this by collecting the bucket by jumping into it and then into the Miner's house as well. One more jump will leave you looking out of the window! Jumping straight up will have you on top of the roof! You can then walk across to the mine lift shaft, the tree, and the factory chimney in the background. Do not jump out of the top of the screen as on the next game two squirrels appear and you will keep on dying on future games, do not go off the sides either as this will kill you. If you only jump once when you collect the bucket and then leave the house when the miner has gone past, a second miner will appear.

Glancing through tons of stuff, this little snippet caught my eye, from **Kevin Howson** *of Kendall, Cumbria.*

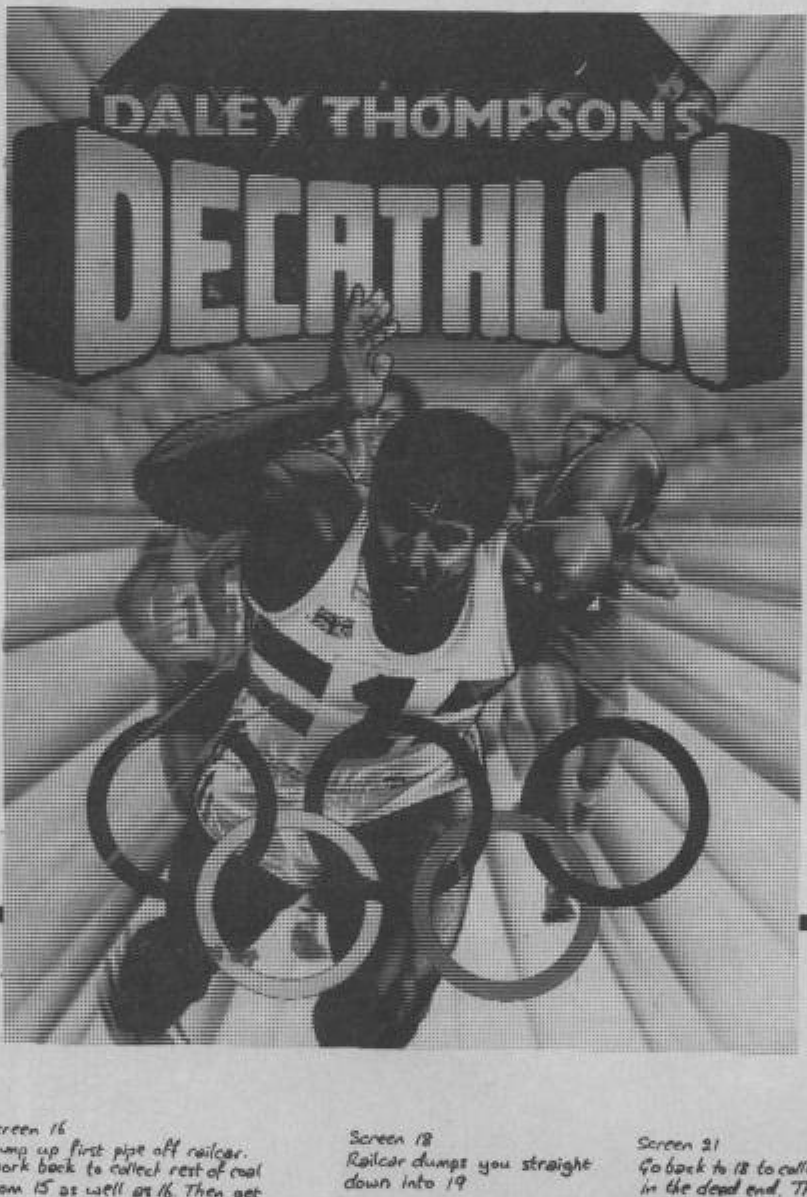
For all those playing C. D. S. *Timebomb* with a Kempston interface, try moving with the fire button pressed. You will move across the screen in a very peculiar way - useful when caught in tight corners!

Steven Jarman *has this to say about Sinclair's* Stop The Express. . .

When collecting the key, jump up vertically and advance one place; the ball bearing will bounce over your head and you will be safe to stop the train. Always let go of the snakebird at the last possible moment as this gives you the chance of collecting another bird straight away.

I always find playing Stop The Express *is a rather hypnotic affair, as you have to get into this unfailing rhythm to succeed in the game.*

A game which has attracted a lot of attention recently has been Daley Thompson's Decathlon *with several people offering kindly*



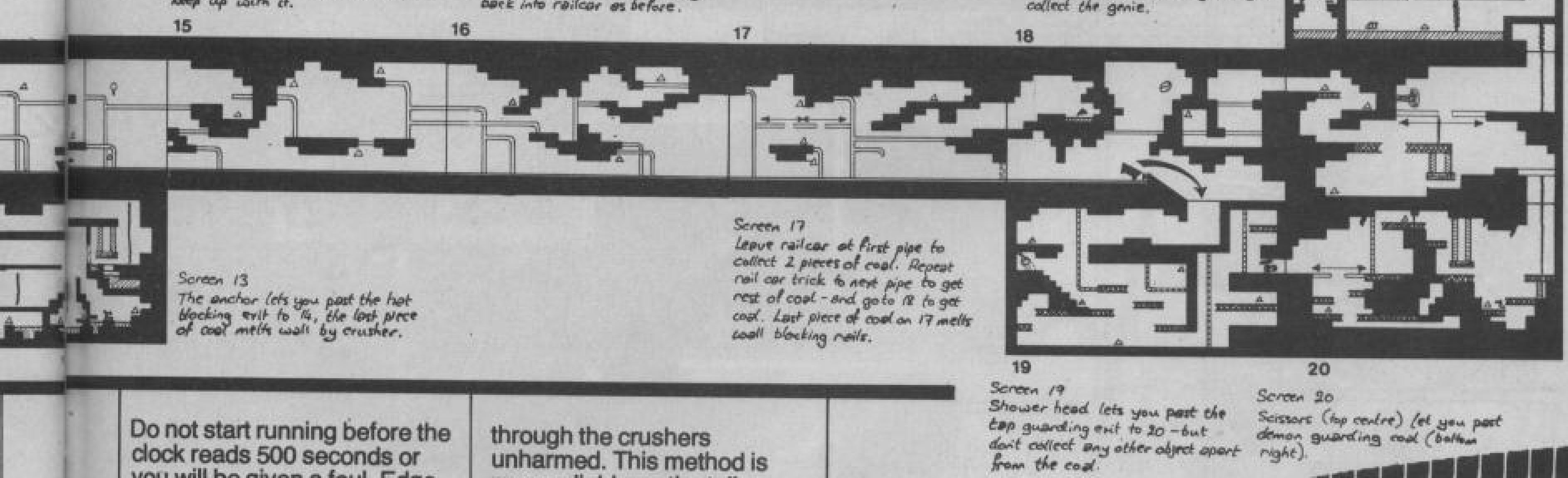
advice for unfit cheats. Here's one from **Liam Kane** *of Middlesbro', Cleveland, who was/*is no good at sports. . .

I found a way to cheat on the high jump. When the bar is at 2.25m or more, you can qualify without jumping over the bar at all. Run up to the bar as normal and when you are right under it, hold your finger down on the jump key. This lets your score rise tremendously.

Here's another tip for hard work avoiders on Daley Thompson's Decathlon *from* **Michael Wescott** *from Huddersfield, and one on* Monty Mole. . .

In the track events it is possible to qualify indefinitely.





Screen 19
Shower head lets you past the tap guarding exit to 20 - but don't collect any other object apart from the coal.

Screen 20
Scissors (top centre) let you past demon guarding coal (bottom right).

Do not start running before the clock reads 500 seconds or you will be given a foul. Edge to within a few metres from the finish line and wait until the clock reaches 999, at which point it ressets to 000, and then you nudge your athlete over the line; to put in an unbelievable time.

On *Monty Mole* crushing devices may be walked through, provided that the bottom of it does not touch Monty on its way down; otherwise you may pass through the crushers unharmed. This method is more reliable on the tall crushers. Monty may fall further than normally allowable by jumping sideways and holding down the 'down' key (or joystick). Handy for middle-top object on screen 15.

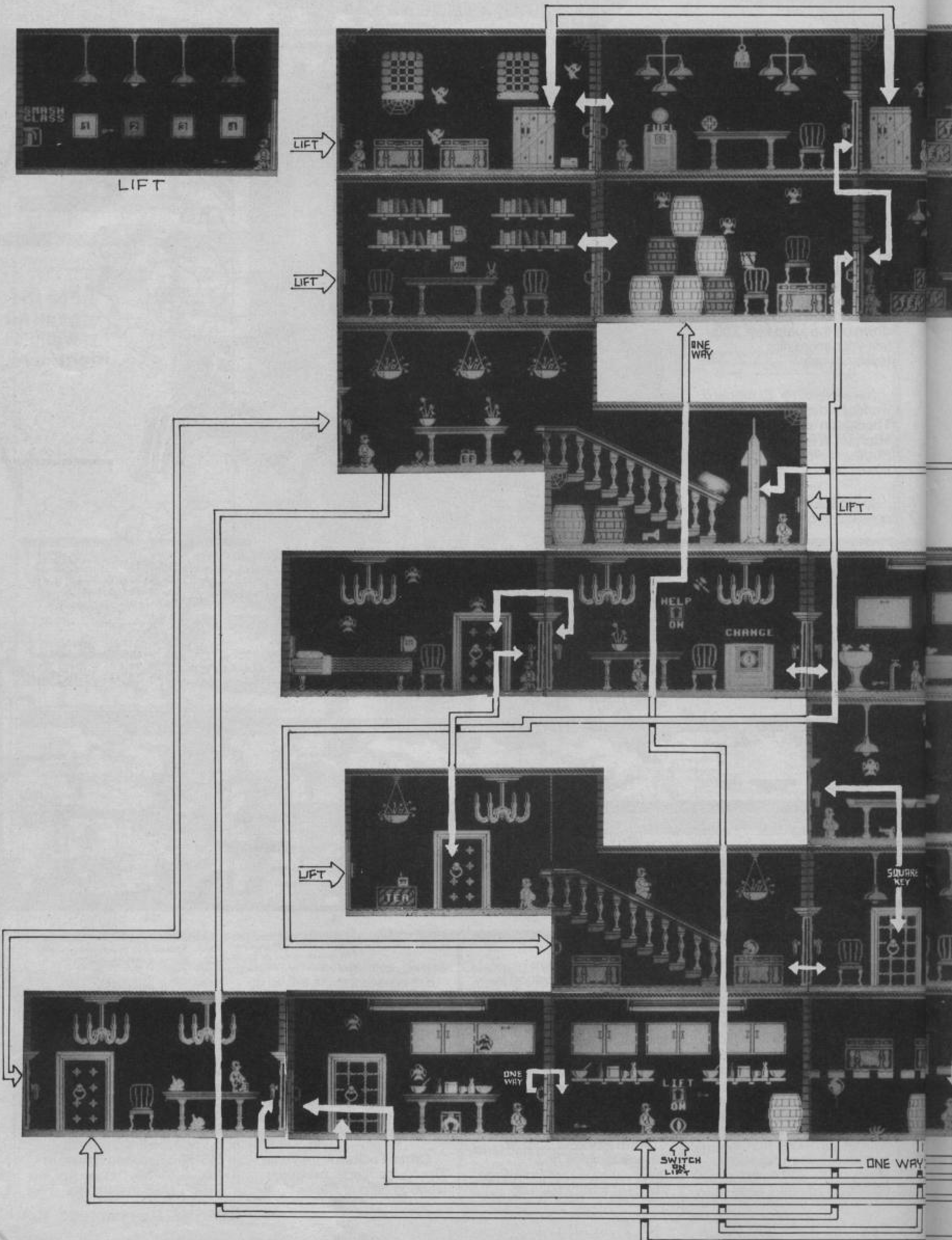
John Roberts *from St. Albans reckons he's discovered what the strange things in* Monty Mole *do. . .*

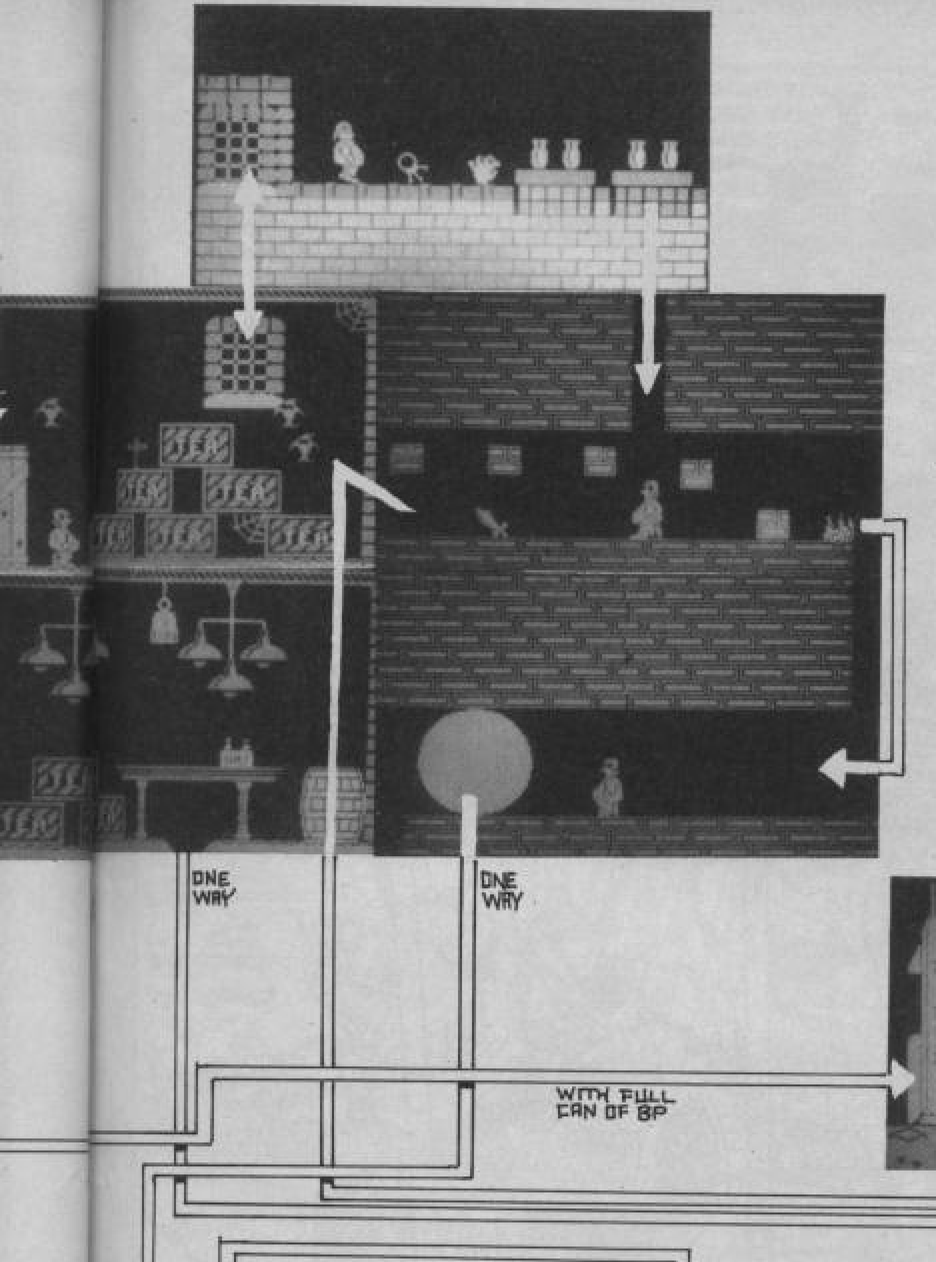
What they do is enable you to walk through a thing that would normally kill you. Does anyone know any POKEs for *Penetrator* or *Automania*?

Omer Teckan *from Venlo, The Netherlands, has been working hard at* Sabre Wulf *and has this to say. . .*

Well we've done it! At last we've found the POKE for *Sabre Wulf*! Here's how to do it: Load the first part with **MERGE** and then type in **POKE 44786, 0** in front of the PRINT USR instruction. Then

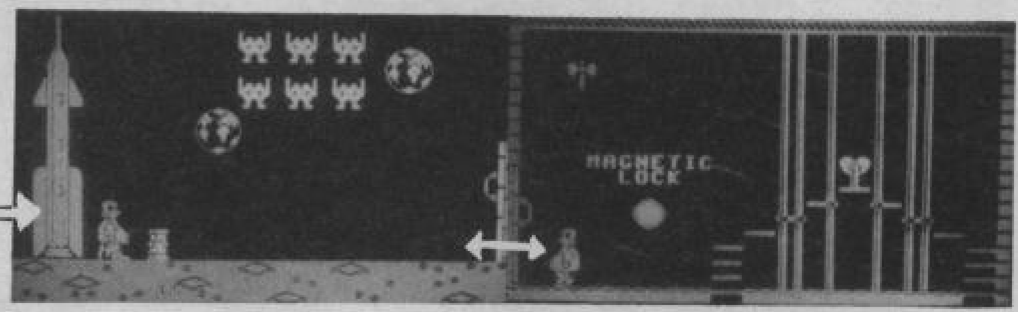
138

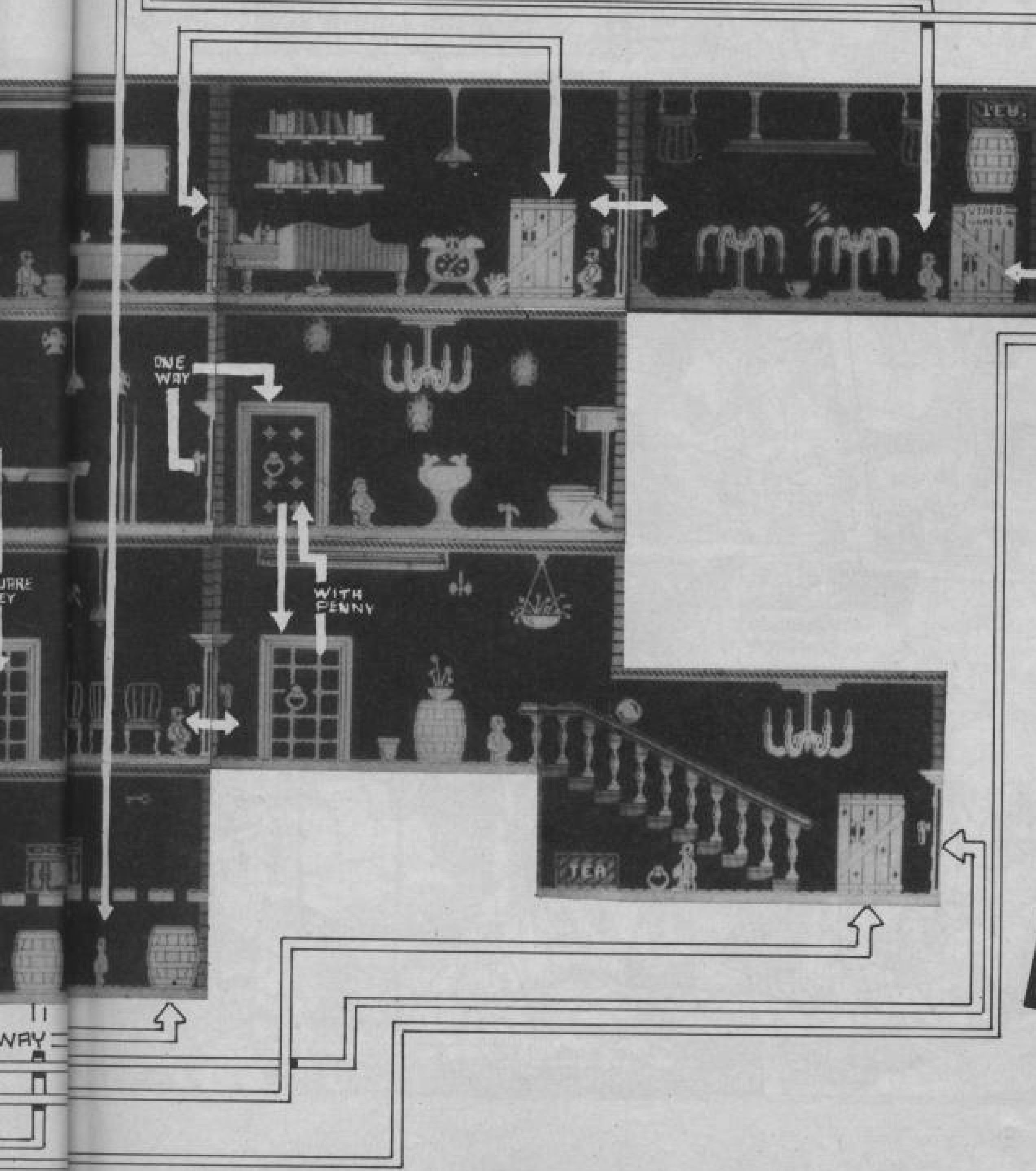

SMASH GLASS
LIFT
LIFT
LIFT
ONE WAY
LIFT
HELP ON
CHANGE
SQUARE KEY
LIFT
TEA
ONE WAY
LIFT ON
SWITCH ON LIFT
ONE WAY



PYJAMA RAMA
the map

Join Wally Week's nightmare in Mikro-Gen's PYJAMARAMA, the result of the CRASH cartography team lead by Robin Candy and Ben Stone, artwork by Oliver Frey.








ULTIMATE
PLAY THE GAME
PRESENTS
JETMAN
JOHN RICHARDSON
OUR HERO, IN HIS SEARCH FOR THE FABULOUS EYE OF OKTUP HAS LOST A DUEL WITH THE ALIEN AND FACES EXECUTION!
RIGHT! OUR CHAMPION WINTH, AN ITHE-CREAM AND THE LOONY ALIEN WILL BE THNUFFED!
STOP ME AND BUY ONE
CHEAT!
THUPER!
IT ITH OUR CUTHTOM TO GIVE LOONY ALIENTH A LATHT MEAL AND A CHOITHE OF EXECUTHION!
WHAT DO YOU PREFER?
ARE THERE ANY TREES ON THIS PLANET?
CORNETS ONLY 20 ZLIDS
NO!
IN THAT CASE I CHOOSE TO HANG!
GOOD CHOITHE! ANYONE WHO WANTH TREETH FOR ITH LATHT MEAL DETHERVETH TO BE HUNG!
CLAP CLAP
?
MIND THAT EGG!
EVEN OUR GALLOWTH WON'T EAT TREETH! JUTHT VICTIMTH!
DROOL
HUNGRY LIKE WOLF!
HAH! THERE IS JUST ONE THING YOU ALIENS HAVE FORGOTTEN...
WOSSAT?
WOT?
EH? WOT
...I GOTTA BANG-STICK!
TSK-TSK
THEE THITH?
THITH LI'L GADGET ITH A NEUTRALITHER! IT MAKETH YOUR PUNY WEAPON UTHLETH!
BEEP
BEEP
WRONG!
POK
ACK
HAH! GIDDADOUIT, YOU LI'L GREEN WAZZOCK! I WILL TAKE OVER THIS MACHINE AND SHOOT OFF BACK TO MY TRUSTY SHIP!
WHAT THE..?
HOP
BOO BOO BOO BOO
THEY'RE THROWING EVERYTHING THEY'VE GOT AT ME...
ZOOM
LOCK OUT!
PEANUTH
BOO!
...BUT JETMAN IS NOT AFRAID!
THEY CANNOT HARM ME WITH THEIR OLD GOODY-WRAPPERS, FAG-PACKETS, AND BITS OF OLD...
...ROPE?
CHOMP
VICTUM!
DROOL
SHRIEK!
RAAAY RAAY
GNASH GNASH CHOMP CHEW
OH, GAWD!
I'M NOT HUNGRY!
I KNOW..
COR!
I'LL HANG IT!
TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP TROMP


HAH! THE FOOTSTEPS HAVE CEASED! THE BEAST MUST BE OFF THE GROUND AND GASPING IT'S LAST!
HAH-HAH! MY PLASTIBUBBLE HELMET HAS ACTIVATED WE MUST BE ENTERING THE VACUUM OF SPACE! I BET THE MONSTERS AS DEAD AS A NIT BY NOW!
FWIP
HAH HAH-HA!
HERE WE ARE, BACK AT MY SHIP!
SOON I SHALL BE SAFE INSIDE!
WO ME AT?
'JUS' CLAMP ON THE OL' MAGNETIC BOOTIES, AND UNLOCK THE DOOR! NO ROTTEN MONSTER CAN HURT ME NOW!
SOS
ACK!
BLIP
ARGH! WO'HAPPEN?
ARGH! WO'HAPPEN?
I'M IN THE SHIP! I'M SAFE!
ALL I GOTTA DO IS CLOSE THE AIRLOCK
DONE IT! NOW TO CUT OFF THIS NASTY BIT OF OL' ROPE WITH MY TRUSTY SCISSORS!
SNIP SNIP
GASP!
CHOKE!
SNATCH
WIPPITY-SNIP
RELIEF
I TINK ME AM GONNA DIE!
TERROR
WOW! AM I LUCKY! IT LIKES ME!
MUST BE MY CHARISSMA!
SHLUP
HMM! BIT SALTY! I'LL HAVE IT LATER!
NOW I CAN SET COURSE FOR THE NEXT GALAXY! WITH THIS TERRIFYING MONSTER BESIDE ME, I WILL BE UNSTOPPABLE IN MY SEARCH FOR THE EYE OF OKTUP!
DAS KAPITAN
GOTH! THAT LOONY THERTAINLY HAD THOME BOTTLE! IT EVEN THTOLE THE GALLOWTH MONTHTER!
IT MUTHT BE THE BRAVETHT ALIEN WE EVER DIDN'T HANG!
IT ALTHO THWIPED YOUR MOTOR!
WELL I THERTAINLY WOULDN'T HAVE DRIVEN IT!
HOWTH THE ITHE-CREAM?
NITHE!
AND SO, OUR HERO VOYAGES ON, PAUSING ONLY TO CONSULT HIS COMPUTER...
I MUST FIND OUT EXACTLY WHERE WE ARE!
W-E-A-R.... SPELLS "WHERE"!
I-S ... SPELLS "ARE"
M-E .... SPELLS "I"
NOW I WAIT A FEW BILLISECS FOR THE VITAL ANSWER!
TOK
RUMBLE RUMBLE
THAT STRANGE NOISE! THAT WARNING LIGHT!
THOSE BIG WORDS ON THE SCREEN!
YOU ARE IN GREAT DANGER
EVEN NOW YOU ARE DRAWING CLOSER TO A TERRIBLE..
RUMBLE
WHAT DOES IT ALL MEAAAAGH!
TUMMY, HIM RUMBLE... MOUTH, HIM EAT!
MMM! NEEDS SALT!
CRUNCH
STREWTH!
JOHN RICHARDSON
GOSH! WHAT TERRIBLE THING IS OUR HERO DRAWING CLOSE TO? HOW WILL HE MANAGE WITHOUT HIS COMPUTER? WHERE WILL THE MONSTER FIND SOME SALT??
NEX' MUNF, EH?

PLAYING TIPS

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type in **RUN** and load the rest of the program.

The results are fantastic. Sabre man becomes indestructible and his speed increases. Jungle animals don't appear, so they can't hurt you, and you don't even have to collect the amulet - you can just enter the cave and finish the game. If the fire button is pressed during the game, everything becomes normal and amulets, which were invisible, become visible so you can collect them. If released again, all animals will freeze and you can continue. There's however, one little problem - sometimes the program crashes, but this is very rare.

Barry Jordan *from Banbury, Oxon, has rather a lot to say about Mikro-Gen's new game* Pyjamarama. . .

To get the key to wind the alarm clock and wake up Wally, you must go to the moon. The screen after the moon has a magnetic lock which you must break by getting the magnet. 1) Get the bucket and fill it with water from the tap in the bathroom. 2) Get the plant pot and the bucket filled with water to the room that has the venus fly traps and the B. P. can. The fly traps are now immobilized and you can collect the B. P. can, leaving the bucket of water. 3) Next, to fill the B. P. can collect the triangle key from the third floor, from the lift room. It should be near the rocket. Together with key and can go out of the first floor from the lift room and go out of the first door you come to walking right. The B. P. can is now filled with petrol from the fuel pump. 4) On the moon there are aliens; the only way to get past them is to have a laser gun full. Now this is hard! a) exchange the pound for the penny. b)the penny gets you into the toilet. c) get the hammer from the toilet, go to the lift room and exchange the hammer for the fire extinguisher. d) leave lift room via door 3. Go out of the next room via door furthest right, climb the tea chests and go out of the window. Now walk right and you willl appear in a room with a still fire. The fire extinguisher lets you past the fire. Walk right past the fire and after you have fallen down, you must immediately walk left and collect the square key. Walking left, go out of this room or a huge ball will kill you. With the square key you can now get into the snooker room - get the laser gun and exit. e) now go into the lift room and make sure you have the triangle key and laser gun.

Go out of the lift room via exit 1. Now walk out of the first door you come to when walking right. You should now be in the room with the fuel pump. Walk out of the door on the right and immediately jump onto the third tea chest and onto the table. Get the battery, and the laser gun should now be full. f)leave the battery where you found it and go through the down exit. g) now, with the full laser gun and the full petrol can, go into the lift room and exit via No 3 door. You then get into the rocket and arrive at the moon. The aliens allow you to pass because you have a full laser gun and you can now get the key to wind up Wally's alarm clock.

UNLESS YOU HAVE NOT DISPLACED THE MAGNET WHICH ACTIVATES THE MAGNETIC LOCK GUARDING THE KEY!

You haven't displaced the magnet?!

Neither have I!!!

But I know you need a pair of scissors to cut the balloon free to take you to where there is a key for the magnetic lock.

The rest is up to you, Wally.

Well if all that doesn't get a few people a bit further, I don't know what will! Thanks for the tips Barry.

Jet Set Willy POKEs are getting to be old hat, and we will be printing loads of them in the **Christmas Special** *next month, but I thought the next tip from* **Richard Barker** *from Yeadon, Leeds, who says he's totally against listings (apart from the cheating ones!), was very interesting as it has possibilities across a wide range of ideas. . .*

For anyone wanting SCREEN of *Jet Set Willy* on tape, type this in with the main loader:

```
100 RESTORE 150
110 POKE 35538, 191:
POKE 35600, 14:POKE
35601, 254
120 POKE 34997, 0:POKE
34998, 0:POKE 35999, 0
130 FOR i = 35547 TO
35590
140 READ a:POKE i,
a:NEXT i
150 READ DATA 253, 229,
221, 229, 221, 33, 237, 255,
17, 17, 0, 175, 205, 194, 4, 6,
50, 118, 16, 253, 17, 0, 27, 62,
255, 221, 33, 0, 64, 205, 194,
4, 243, 221, 225, 253, 225, 14,
2 54, 0, 0, 0, 0, 0
```

(Press PAUSE button to save)

When loading the SCREEN back, you will be greeted with the name **Program ??????????**, so what you will need to do is; 1) miss out the bit of file which tells you the name, 2) load the first part of another SCREEN— on tape (*Sabre Wulf* etc), 3) carry on loading *JSW* screen.

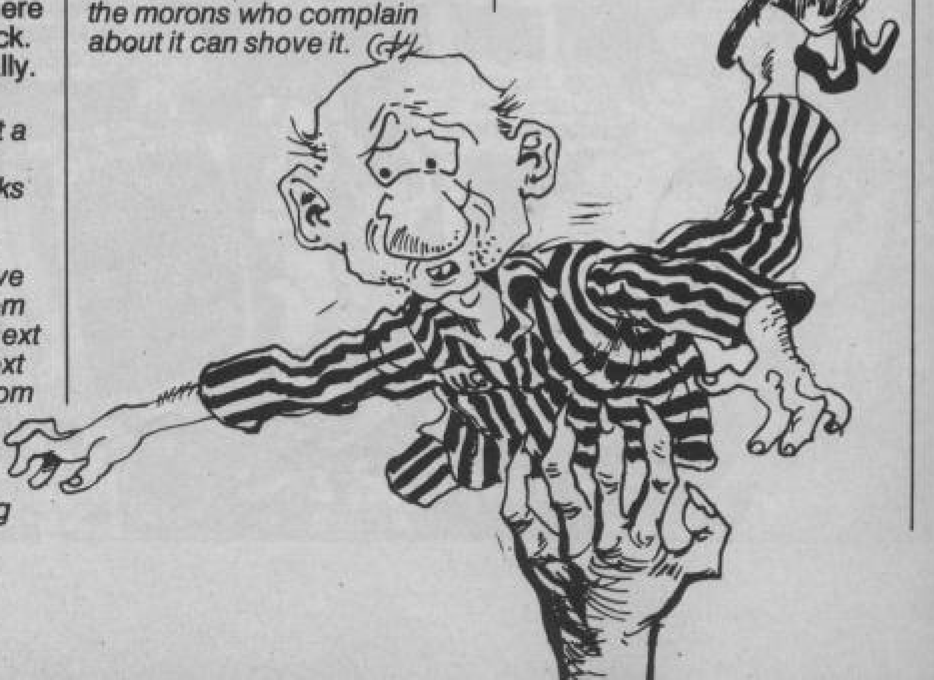
By doing this, you can load the screen into a drawing utility program (I use *Melbourne Draw*) and discover the grid patterns for the UDGs. This way, you can load a UDG utility (I use *Paintbox*, and make up all the characters from the game, or make up your own.*

By the way, I think the tips section is a great idea for the mag, as is the Signpost section for adventures, and all the morons who complain about it can shove it.

Richard is also impressed by Oliver Frey's painting of Ziggy on the front cover of the October issue, and wonders whether there is any way of getting a poster. I have asked about this, but it seems it is a very expensive business making posters. What I do know, is that the **Christmas Special** *has a giant sized poster in it for free with a Frey painting on either side (it's a calendar really, six months on either side), but I don't think either of them will be from the October cover. But don't give up hope, Richard, posters are being looked into, I'm told.*

Well that seems to be all the room I've got this month, what with the map and all. No doubt the next big excitement will be the rush of tips, POKEs and cheats on the new Ultimate games! Keep the bits and pieces coming.







DARK STAR

You are flying through a galaxy continually fending off attackers. Your main objective is to land on enemy occupied planets, break through their defences and destroy their bases. You have heard other games described as fast and smooth but this is the game others will be judged by. Game difficulty, Options and Keys are all fully user definable

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RETURN OF THE THINGS

Halls of the Things* was the first of the arcade adventures. This is the long awaited sequel, taking over from the point where you have escaped from the tower and are looking forward to a rest, no such luck, it's nastier out there than it is in the tower.

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*Now available for the Amstrad CPC 64 and Commodore 64

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SPECTRUM

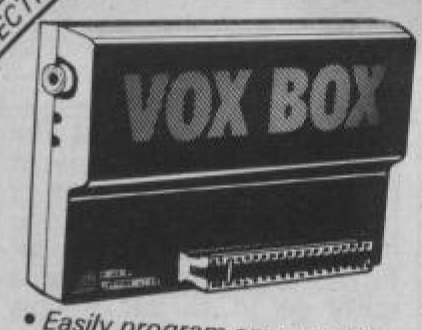
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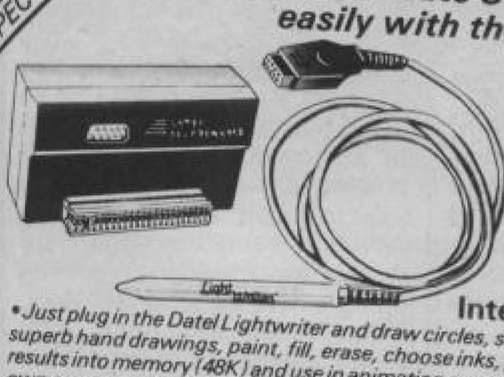


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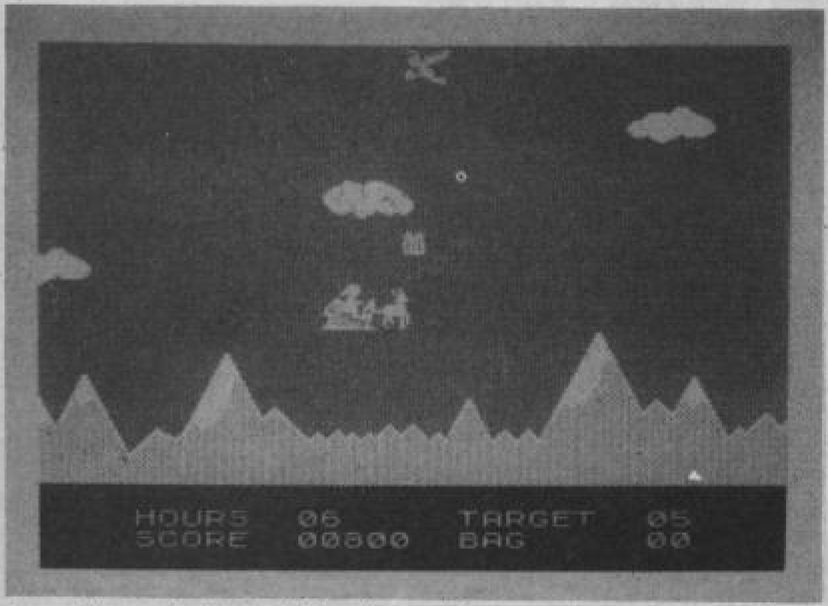
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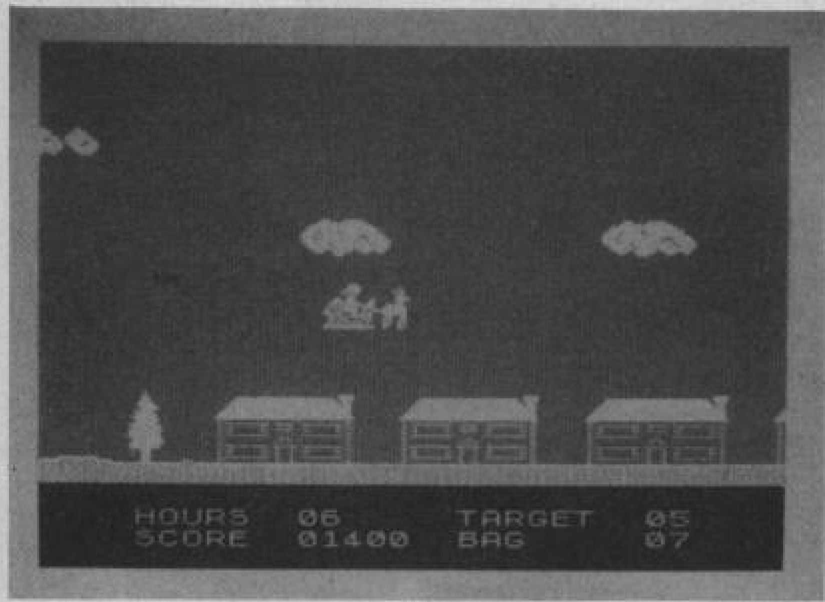
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A presentless Santa collects gifts from the angels before making his descent to a rooftop.

SPECIAL DELIVERY

Producer: **Creative Sparks**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£6.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author:

It has long been a tradition in the popular music business to produce Christmas 'hit' songs - something suitable to the season. *Special Delivery* by Creative Sparks is probably setting a new trend (a dubious one, many may think) by bringing out the first computer Christmas game.

In *Special Delivery* you take the starring role as Santa Claus on his merry way delivering presents to all the excited children. Unfortunately Santa has only five hours to complete the task, and if that wasn't bad enough, he discovers that there aren't enough presents to go round. The only way to ensure there are enough is to collect them as his helpers drop them from on high, avoiding the clouds as he goes.



The game is basically played in three stages. First, Santa is driving his sleigh through the air over mountainous terrain. He has to avoid the clouds, otherwise one of the presents in the bag is lost. Above, angels are dropping presents which must be collected. A target figure for collection is set at the base of the screen. Once this is met, you progress to the second screen. Some angels are red in colour - don't collect those parcels! Some clouds are thunderous, and if Santa is hit by lightning he loses an hour of time.

The second screen commences with Santa arriving over some large houses and he must land on the roof and walk to the chimney. Entering the chimney, the screen cuts to an interior view. Three ladders lead downwards, and you control Santa as he descends, moving him left and right to avoid the fireballs that rush upwards. On harder screens there are also objects falling down.

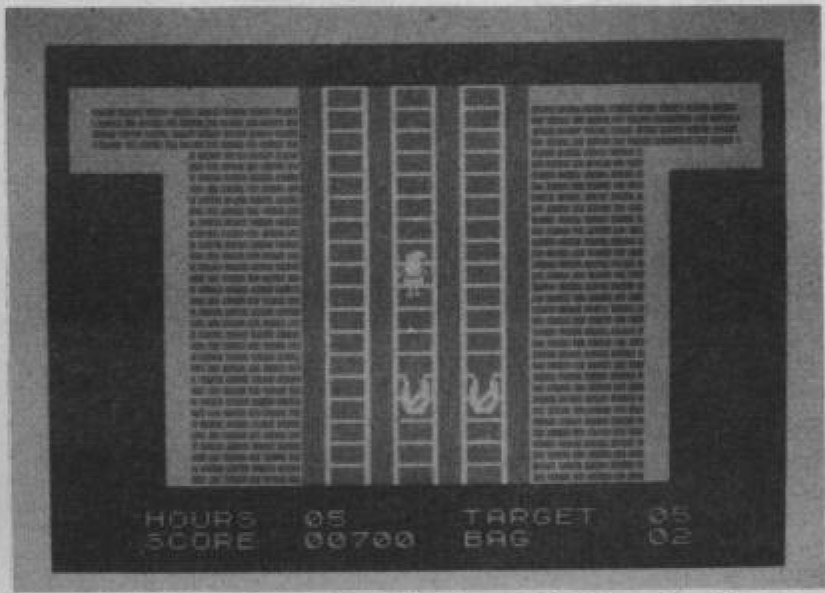
Getting down safely leads Santa into the house. This is displayed as a 3D cutaway of the floors, with stairs leading up. The idea is to drop a parcel beneath the Christmas tree then get out to move onto more difficult screens. Failure to collect the target figure of parcels from the angels in screen one, means that you cannot land on a house, but must attempt to drop parcels accurately on to the houses.

CRITICISM

● 'This is a Seasonal game for you, the only one I've seen that relates to Christmas or the fallacy of Santa Claus (no - he's real, isn't he?. . .) The novel idea of collecting your presents from the angels of heaven above, avoiding hazards of lightning and mountains and devils (does Santa really go to all this trouble every year?) is very appealing. Whipping down chimneys is more difficult than I first thought and gets even more difficult on the higher stages with loads of flames rushing up to meet you with soot whizzing down after you - difficult, eh! Now here comes the exciting part - actually placing the presents at the base of the Christmas tree, while avoiding the happy children rushing to see if Santa has arrived. Unfortunately you can't climb up chimneys, so it's off to find the key to open the front door, although sometimes the door is wierdly placed, sometimes on the second or third floor. Despite the seasonal overtones, this turns out to be quite a difficult game, but I don't think it's going to be very addictive. '

● *'With Chistmas getting ever nearer, it is time for the seasonal spate of games. And here's one complete with Santa, plus reindeer, presents an' all. This is a game which I doubt anyone will be playing in June, but with that said, it's still a good game. The graphics are small but smooth and well drawn and a good jingle bells tune is played. Special* Delivery *is fun to play and provides quite good value for money considering how many stages there are and that some of them are totally different from the others. The game is addictive without being tremendously time consuming or taxing. A good game worth considering for Christmas.'*





Making a SPECIAL DELIVERY can be hazardous if you must insist on using a chimney.

● 'I must admit to being rather horrified by the thought of a Christmas-specific game - would it feature Bing Crosby or Perry Como on the sound track? Actually *Special Delivery* turns out to be a tough game to play with lively graphics and quite a lot of content. And no Bing Como anywhere! The mix of 'Scramble Santa' with 'Santa in Hell' and '3D Santa Beserk' seems to work rather well to result in something quite new. Hardly a 'great' but very good for that.'

COMMENTS

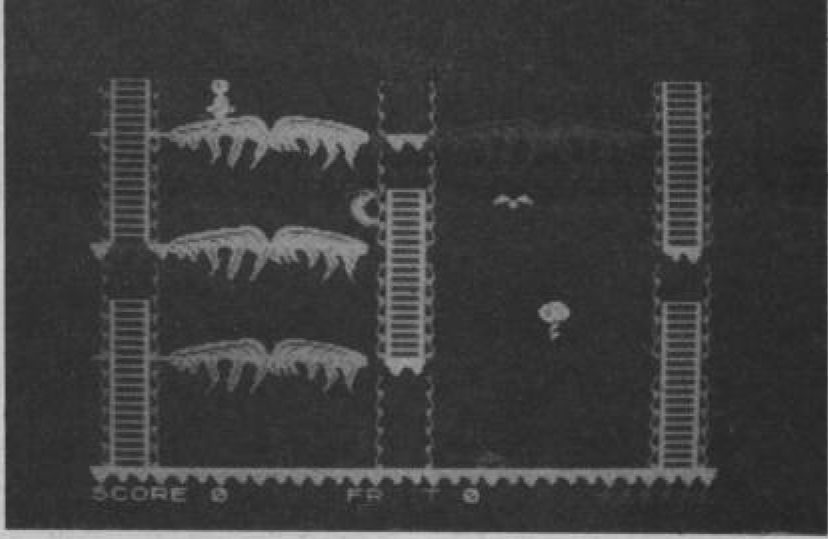
Control keys: cursor keys
Joystick: Sinclair, Kempston, Fuller, AGF, Protek
Keyboard play: awkward on the fast bits if you don't like the cursors, but responsive
Use of colour: good
Graphics: smallish characters, but smooth, well drawn and very good scrolling
Sound: good tunes
Skill levels: 1 with progressive difficulty
Lives: 6
Screens: 3
Special features:

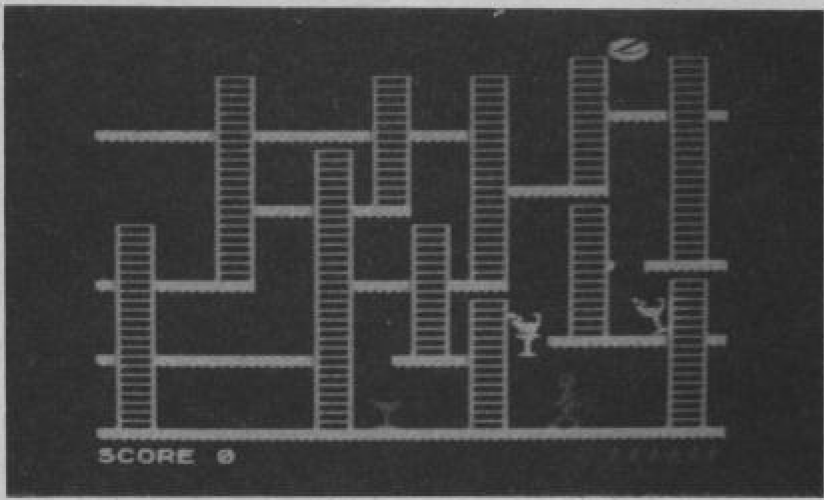
General rating: a novel and seasonal game that turns out to be well worth it.

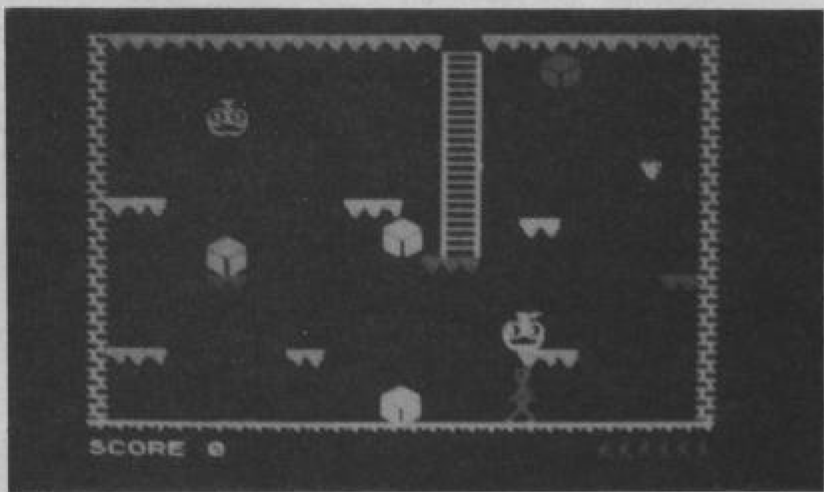
Use of computer	75%
Graphics	70%
Playability	70%
Getting started	69%
Addictive qualities	72%
Value for money	70%
Overall	71%

TROUBLE BREWIN'

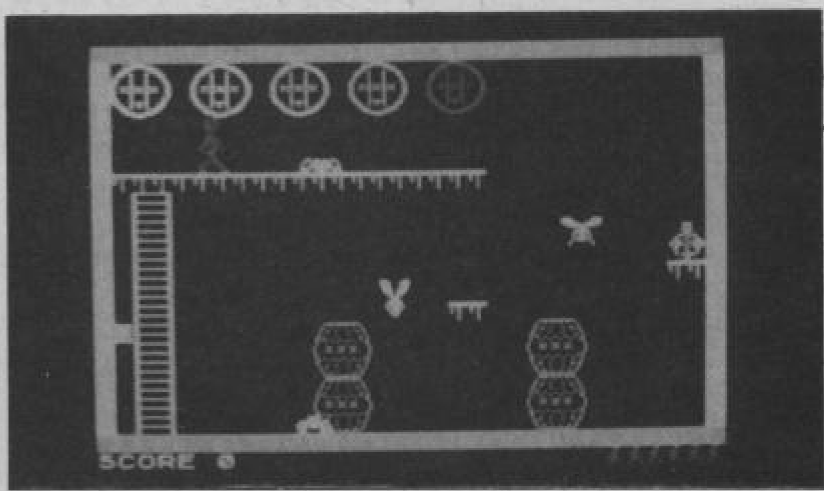
Producer: **Silversoft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **Machine code**
Author:

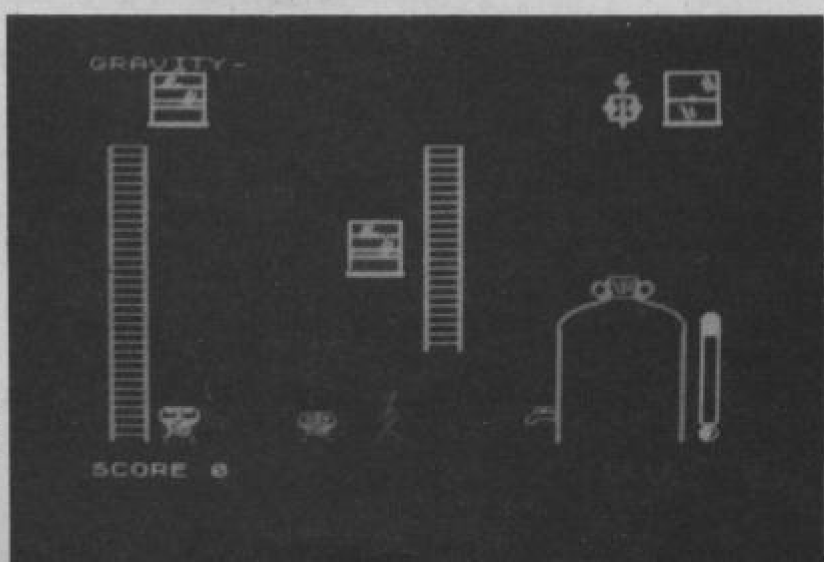






The five screens from Trouble Brewin'





Just lately there seems to have been something of a 'looking back' at basic ideas in arcade type games, most notably from Silversoft with titles like *Hyperaction, Super Mutt* and now *Trouble Brewin'*. Silversoft seem to be taking care to incorporate varied elements of traditional games into new ones with the experience gained over two years of what makes a game addictive to play.

Trouble Brewin' is basically a platform type game where you guide your man through several screens, collecting a number of objects on each screen whilst avoiding the nasties which include animated corkscrews, apples, 'pimen', slugs and others. The screens incorporate both main elements of platform games, the use of ladders and the function of jumping. So on one screen it may be ladders that are the main feature, whereas on another it might just be jumping from a small platform to an even smaller platform. Part of the attraction of such games is the fun of seeing what's coming next, how to get through the various hazards, and in the case of *Trouble Brewin'*, what the slightly different objectives in each screen are.

As the title sugests, the action is taking place in a brewery, and indeed, on one screen there is even the alchohol vat to be seen, getting hotter as you watch it. The objective here is to control the temperature by keeping all the windows shut, whilst avoiding the nasties which are constantly opening them.

CRITICISM

● 'This game requires a good combination of skills in judgement and timing. I found that each screen required a very high degree of skill and luck. Screen layout is attractive and very colourful - well finished. The graphics, of course, are smooth and cheerful, and they work very well. Each screen is different, in fact a different game in itself. But it is basically a platform game with quite a few other elements thrown in. The keyboard is well positioned and is highly responsive. *Trouble Brewin'* is difficult but highly playable and has all the features required of an addictive game.'

● *'It must be hard to ring the changes within the basic format of a type of game, but Silversoft have managed very nicely with* Trouble Brewin', *providing the right sort of difficulty so that timing and jumping skills have to be good. The five screens are very lively to look at, and they make you want to get on to the next. Smooth graphics, with plenty of animation add to the fun of what is a very addictive game.*'

● 'I thought *Trouble Brewin'* was a jolly game to play, reasonably addictive without being anything major. In other words, very fine but not amazingly exciting. It does have a wide range of graphics, which are well drawn and animated, and everything is certainly very colourful - which helps. Perhaps I'm a bit tired of the jumping platform game, and I don't think *Trouble Brewin'* has anything very new to say. Which isn't to say that it is poor value - there's plenty of content and the difficulty factor is quite high. Try it and see.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down, N/M left/right, 2 - 5 to jump
Joystick: unstated on preview copy, presumed to be Kempston, Cursor and Sinclair
Keyboard play: good positions and very responsive, good jumping action
Use of colour: very good - bright
Graphics: smooth, fast, well animated and large
Sound: above average
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 6
Screens: 5
Special features:
General rating: a very good and addictive game made by combining traditional elements well.

Use of computer	75%
Graphics	79%
Playability	81%
Getting started	82%
Addictive qualities	82%
Value for money	80%
Overall	**80%**

This universe runs according to a number of laws. One of them – 'Sod's Law' – states that doors are always locked when you have forgotten, or cannot find your key. Mr Sod might also have added that the likelihood of being attacked by mutant spiders is directly proportional to your desire to get through the door. . .

THE TERMINAL MAN





STORY BY KELVIN GOSNELL© DRAWN BY OLIVER FREY©



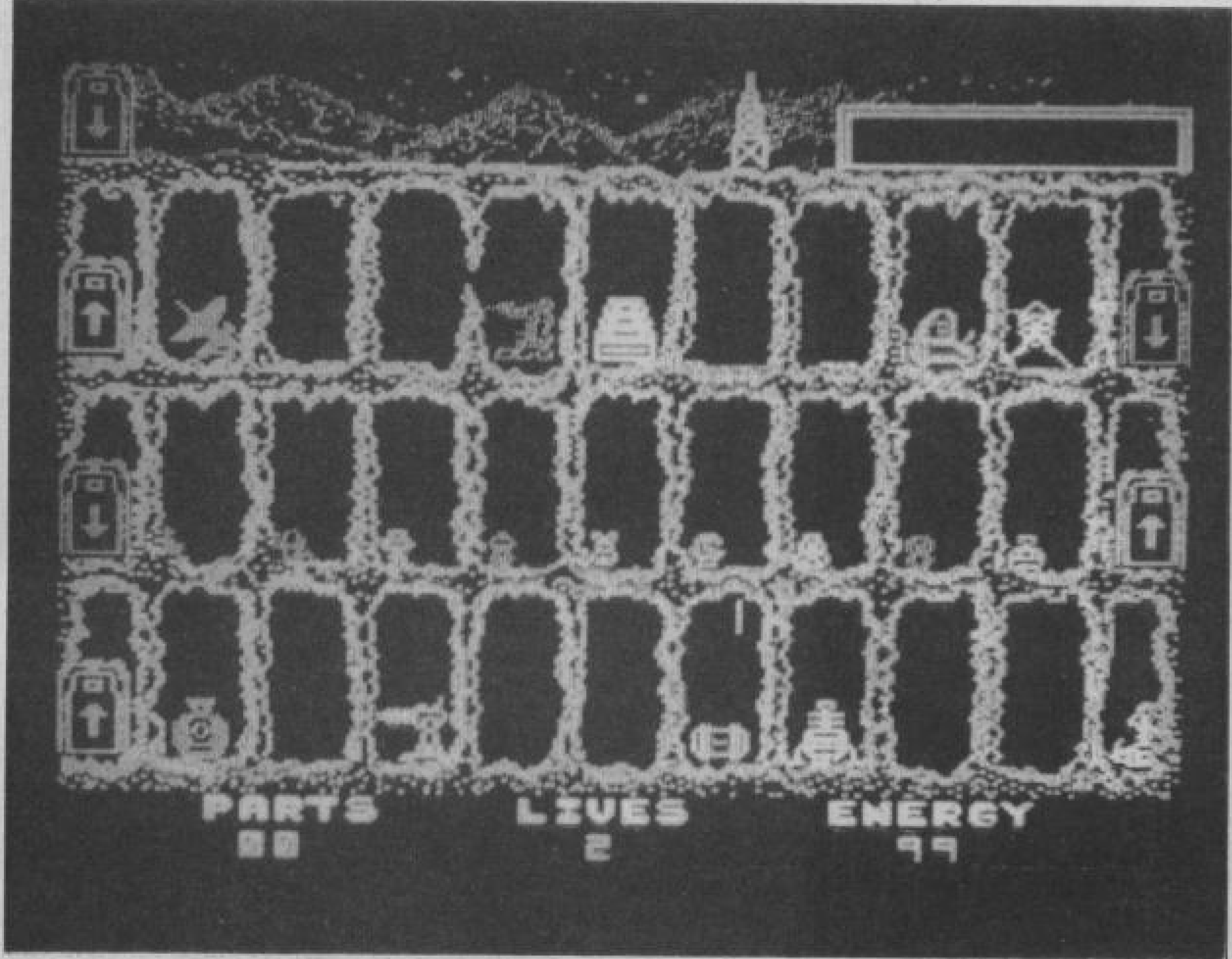
WELL, YOU DON'T HAVE TO USE ALL THE POWER, YOU KNOW!
WE COULD GO A LITTLE SLOWER...
TRUE...
—BUT I WOULDN'T ENJOY IT SO MUCH!
BESIDES—THE ARTIFICIAL GRAVITY OF THE ENTRY VORTEX IS VERY STRONG, WE NEED TO PUT ALL OUR POWER RESERVES INTO KINETIC ENERGY TO RUN AGAINST IT!
WHAT..?
WE'VE GOT TO GO LIKE A BAT OUT OF HELL!
CROSS WAS A STRANGE MIXTURE OF LIFEFORMS, ONE PART OF HIM HAD ONCE CONTROLLED A STARLINER...
IT WAS THAT PART WHICH URGED THE SHUTTLE THROUGH THE DEADLY BEND IN THE ENTRY VORTEX...
CROSS! LOOK OUT!!



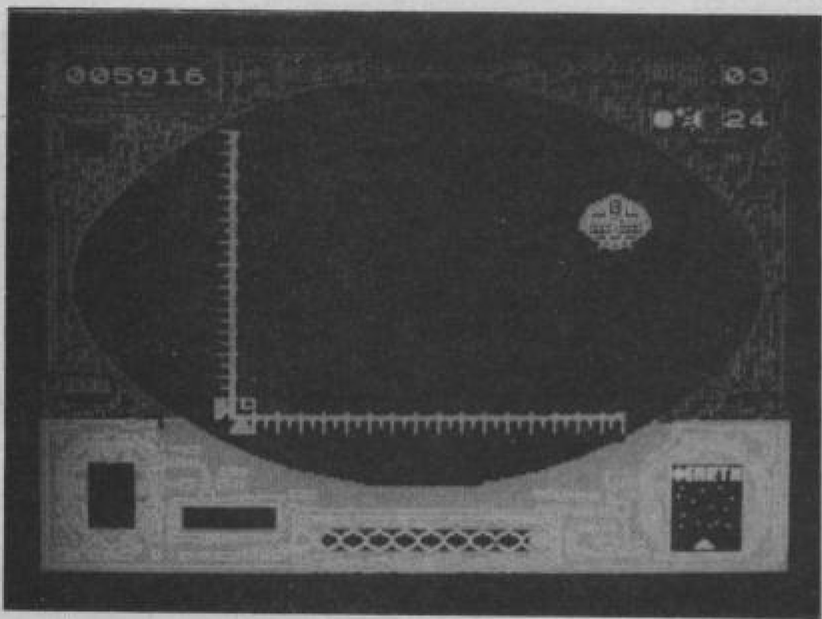
Next: End of a Quest

Worlds At War

Producer: **Esteem More Than Equal**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£2.99**
Language: **machine code**
Author:



Medieval, dusty looking graphics make a strange mixture in the first gothic game for the Spectrum – WORLDS AT WAR.



Worlds at War is an arcade game in three sections - or 'chapters' as the software house prefers to call them.

Part One - sorry, Chapter One is called 'Exodus From the Red Planet', which should tell the astronomers among you that this game is set on, and then off, Mars. The rise in ground temperature has driven the Martians underground. But even here, all is not safe. Toxic fumes seeping up from the planet's core is causing the supporting pillars to collapse. So the Martians must collect all the parts of a ship together to escape. These parts together with fuel and food, are dotted about the caverns of the complex and must be assembled on the surface by the character you control. Lifts communicate between the three underground levels and the surface. Only one object at a time may be carried and you must avoid the pets, driven mad by lack of water, and the toxic sand seeping down through the roof.

Chapter Two - 'The Journey' is set in space. The fuel ship is ahead of the main passenger ship, but the guiding computer does not work properly, so the target cursors have to be moved manually.

Chapter Three - 'The War Begins' sees us back in familiar territory - CRL Land. The ship has landed on a common on Earth. Before the ship has even cooled, the earthlings are attacking with cannon. . .

CRITICISM

● 'What first strikes you about this game is the use of colour. It has been used quite well but the graphics are 'strange' - they're not what I would call 'definite' graphics - more of an old and mystical type with no straight edges and no definite lines. Collecting the parts of the ship is quite a task, I can assure you. It's also highly frustrating, and eventually just drives you up the wall. I gave up on this game long before I should have. To tell the truth I just ran out of patience. In other words - no way was it appealing. It says on the blurb for screen two that it, 'has the most realistic cockpit display ever seen' - can this really be true? It's interesting and different - true, but hardly what I would call the most realistic. Overall, I wouldn't even pay a pound for this game.'

● *'When I watched someone else playing this game, I thought it was confusing. When I played this game I found it was confusing. The reason for this is the extraordinary looking graphics which are - well, dust-smothered. Also, it takes a while to comprehend exactly what is happening on the screen. The game itself is rather tedious for some reason that I can't exactly put my finger on - it just didn't grab me at all.'*

● 'Worlds at War sounds very good when you read about it, and at its low price - three different games in one, sounds like good value. But oddly, the thing doesn't really work. It all looks very different, but the graphic characters are small in a busy screen, and everything gets lost. I did like the medieval look of the graphics however. In general it isn't a user-friendly program either. I can't say it's exactly bad, but it isn't all that good.

COMMENTS

Control keys: Q/A up/down and pickup/drop, O/P left/right, SPACE to jump and hover (use energy)
Joystick: none
Keyboard play: responsive and well laid out
Use of colour: very good
Graphics: weird, could be better, but weirdness gets in the way sometimes
Sound: continuous
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: 3
Special features:
General rating: below average.

Use of computer	55%
Graphics	61%
Playability	29%
Getting started	42%
Addictive qualities	20%
Value for money	28%
Overall	39%

SPACE PROFESSOR

Producer: **Front Runner**
Memory required: **16K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language:
Author:

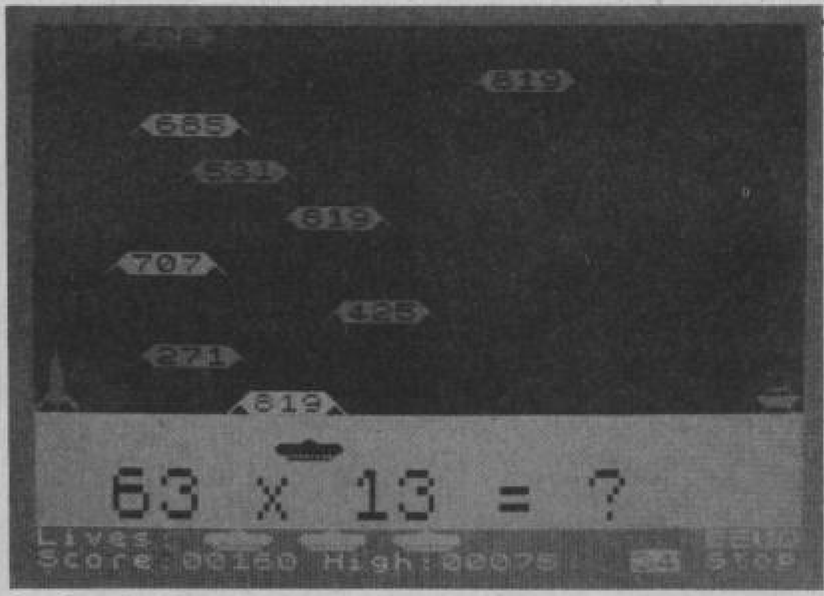
Space Professor is an educational game which requires some arcade skill of the traditional variety, for it is a shoot em up. It also requires some quite nifty mathematical abilities on the harder levels!

The screen takes the form of something between 'Space Invaders' and 'Galaxians'. You are at the base, on the ground in a laser tank, firing upwards at the hordes of descending alien craft. Each of these has a number on it. Below the playing area a sum will be displayed and you must work out the answer as fast as possible so that you can shoot up all the aliens excepting the craft with the correct answer to the sum on it. This must be allowed to land unhindered to win. Meanwhile, you must avoid being hit by the missiles that the aliens are firing down on you. ep On an easy level, this is pretty simple and suitable for fairly young children. However, on a harder level with, say division and a fast speed, working out 891 divided by 91, can be quite difficult.

There is an option menu to select between addition, subtraction, multiplication or division; three speeds of play; and control from keyboard or joystick. If you get a sum right, the computer plays a tune and the arriving space craft puts down feet and puffs importantly to a stop.

CRITICISM

● *'Space Professor* is a very unusual way of learning fast calculations in arithmetic. Of course, at first I chose the easy level just to get into the game - this is a good beginners level. Moving onto level three - now that's a totally different matter - you don't even have time to look at the sum because the aliens are moving towards you so rapidly - it's a nightmare! How ever are you meant to mentally calculate huge numbers while zapping aliens? And it's no use having a calculator, because you need all your



Come in number 819 – you time is up.

concentration on the screen. A good, fast colourful learning aid for simple (and not so simple) arithmetic. '

● *'This is exactly the sort of game that is likely to cause more argument about whether computer games can be educational, especially in the light of Front Runner's very 'hit arcade game' style advertising for it. What they have managed very nicely is a game that does have some reasonable arcade skill requirement as well as a fairly fast mind on the calculations. I have to confess to playing this in two, one on the keyboard and one on the calculator keyboard! Some of the harder sums are really quite a handful. I would think that* Space Professor *will provide excellent opportunities for distinguishing moving objects and linking them with an answer to a question, and making an immediate decision on how to act according to the answer. '*

COMMENTS

Control keys: 9 and zero left/right and 1 to fire
Joystick: Kempston, Protek, AGF and Sinclair 2
Keyboard play: responsive, with simple, well positioned keys
Use of colour: good
Graphics: large, simple shapes, quite fast
Sound: good tunes, some spot effects
Skill levels: 3
Lives: 3
Special features:
General rating: an interesting educational program with rather more arcade content than usual.

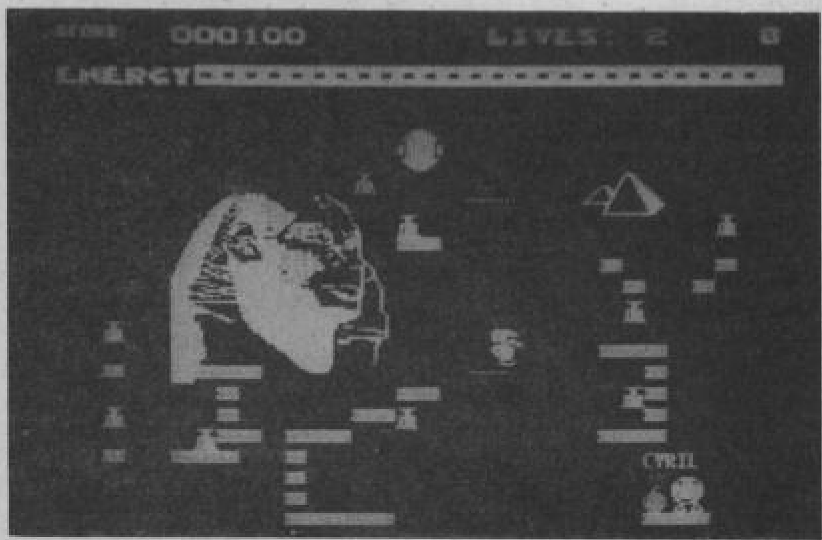
Use of computer	**75%**
Graphics	**N/A**
Playability	**70%**
Getting started	**78%**
Addictive qualities	**N/A**
Value for money	**68%**
Overall	**73%**

BOMBSCARE

Producer: **Dollar Soft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **Machine code**
Author: **R. Stevenson & P. Durbridge**

Guide Boris, the bomb disposal expert, around many of the world's greatest Cities. Collect detonators planted by the evil Cyril Saboteur and save the world from its impending doom - it says on the inlay. The detonators are obviously rather big ones, judging from the lively loading screen, which shows a city under the pall of what must be an atomic explosion. The on-screen instructions make all clear as the text scrolls upwards - they're nuclear detonators.

Bombscare is basically a platform game with each screen set around a famous monument such as the Sphinx and Great Pyramid on screen one. On the several platforms are purple detonators which may be collected by walking



Going up, 2nd floor – sarcophagae and embalming fluids, 3rd floor – and nuclear detonators. . .

over them. When one goes red, it is about to explode, so it makes sense to try and get those first, as you're not allowed much time. Control is with a left/right and jump key but there are ropes on some screens to be climbed and descended.

CRITICISM

● *'Bombscare* is quite a good little platform game. The graphics etc. are not up to the standards of *MM* but nonetheless they are above average, if somewhat simple. The game is fairly difficult and mildly addictive. I would like a sound on/off control as this begins to get on one's nerves after a while - also the inter-screen/game pause is too long. Overall, well above average.'

● *'This is a novel platform game because you can see famous sites around the world as you battle to save them from Cyril Saboteur. The graphics are fine and the sounds are*



NOAH

Producer: E. S. P.
Memory required: 48K
Retail price: £
Language: machine code
Author:

In the beginning, Adam and Eve weren't as good as they should have been, and as a result of their indiscretions, humanity wasn't as good either. In despair, God decided to get rid of everything and start over. Only Noah was nice, so God told him to build an ark and fill it with pairs of animals, so they should be saved.

In this biblical epic you play the erstwhile Noah, not much loved by his fellow humans because of his tales of gloom and doom, and you must travel through the 256 screens collecting the 31 pairs of animals that live in the badlands and beyond the Great Wall in various unsavoury places.

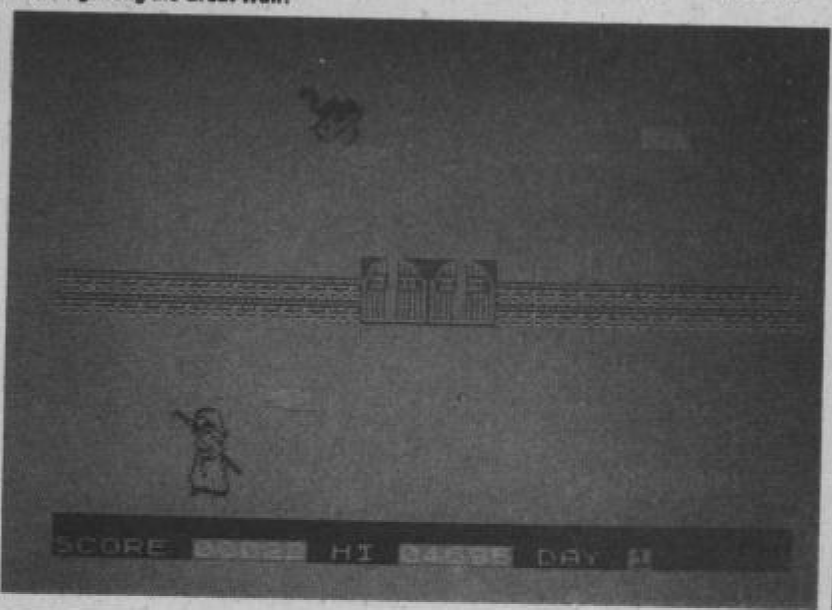
The basic colouring of this game is yellow, with large graphics of animals in blue. Various obstacles confront Noah in his search like shrubs, trees, fences and the Great Wall itself, to which he must find the Great Gate key. Puddles are also a problem, and with a prescience of what is to come, Noah is frightened of puddles! Hitting a forbidden object causes the screen to flash with the ominous warning, 'Whoops, Apocalypse!' Too much of this sort of thing will kill you off and condemn you to a very long re-intro.

Getting an animal to follow you is not very easy, some of them don't want to go, and there is the added problem that you cannot leave a screen unless you have first eaten the parcel of purple food. Some animals, snails especially, seem to cause an apocalypse, so what with avoiding them, dragging an unwilling animal, and trying to get at the food that the animal is obligingly blocking you off from it can become quite hard.

CRITICISM

● '*Noah* has rather large graphics which move a little on the slow side. The task of collecting the animals is no quick thing - in fact just trying to get one back is a task in itself. The animals are depicted well, each (from what I saw) looking like a proper elephant, snake, sheep etc. Because my Kempston had reversed itself between left and right with this game, I was slow to make progress. Overall this is a good game which will take quite a

The animals went in two by two – well the old song made it sound easy. Here, NOAH is trekking along the Great Wall.



alright. The game itself is quite fun to play and very frustrating, almost to the point of despair - that's the only thing that marred an otherwise good game. It's just a bit too hard to start off with. So, quite a good platform game with some nice graphics, and what makes it even better is that CRASH (in logo form) is the Hall of Fame Slime - or was this just bribery in the pre-production copy!?'

● 'This must be one of the most difficult platform games I've played for months, so much so that it seems to me that this will definitely spoil the playability of the game. Colour hasn't been really well used in this game, and everything seemed to be a little bit too small. Sound is well used, but does drive you up the wall and does delay play between lives and screens. Generally, an over-finicky game as far as controlling your character goes.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: O/P left/right, Q/A climb/descend rope, SYM SHIFT to jump



Joystick: none
Keyboard play: responsive but finicky
Use of colour: average although not much
Graphics: some nice drawings of famous sites, playing graphics on the small side
Sound: nice tune and spot effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 3
Screens: several
Special features:
General rating: above average, mildly addictive, though difficult.

Use of computer	58%
Graphics	62%
Playability	59%
Getting started	59%
Addictive qualities	60%
Value for money	63%
Overall	**60%**

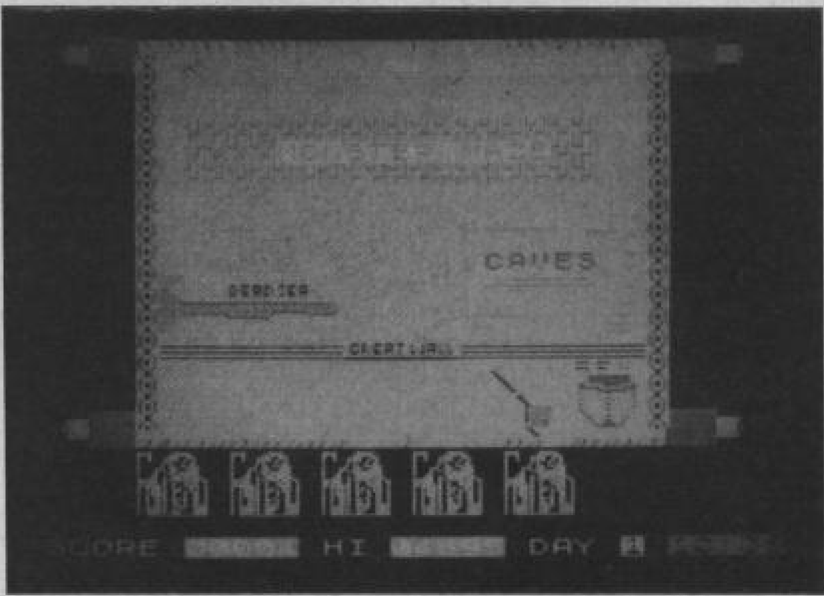
time to get into and complete.'

● *At first I wondered what a game called* Noah *could be based upon. I was soon to find out what this monster of a game was - it drove me up the wall. The burden of having to collect food before you can move off each screen was frustrating, and while nothing seemed to go on as the game progressed, I became bored. I tried to persuade an animal to come with me to the ark, but it said, 'Not tonight - I've got a headache!' I found* Noah *impossible to make any progress with whatsoever. To sum up this game it must be called the most unaddictive, highly frustrating, boring, non-progressive, slow game ever invented - it takes about as long to make its point as the Bible.'*

● 'One thing you can say about *Noah* is that it *is* different. It's also rather large with 256 screens full of unwilling animals. Fortunately, in an attempt to prevent magazines doing maps of it, one is provided, although it only gives a vague indication, and irritatingly pops up every time you bump into something. The graphics are quite good of the animals but Noah himself looks a little on the simple side. It's an odd mixture, and I don't think I really enjoyed it, too much irritation factor to be really good.'

COMMENTS

Control keys: Z/X left/right, O/K up/down, M for map
Joystick: Kempston, AGF, Protek, Sinclair
Keyboard play: not very responsive
Use of colour: not over colourful
Graphics: animals nicely drawn, Noah poor, movement by block
Sound: not much



The map in NOAH.

Skill levels: 1
Lives: 1 with allowance of appocalypses
Screens: 256
Special features:
General rating: mixed feelings from poor to good between reviewers.

Use of computer	67%
Graphics	49%
Playability	45%
Getting started	52%
Addictive qualities	27%
Value for money	44%
Overall	**47%**

CATWALK

Producer: **Power Soft**
Memory required: **48K**
Retail price: **£5.95**
Language: **machine code**
Author: **P. Barsby**

Catwalk makes a nice change from the usual run of voilent computer games, bceause here you play a night-prowling cat, whose harmless interests include pouncing on - and eating small mice and birds - well it's nature anyway! Suitably, you have nine lives and nine screens of varied action to get through, munching on fur and feathers all the way. There is a very good demo which shows you all the screens, taking you from home, through a building site, the graveyard, to eventually end up in a missile silo, of all places. In each of these different locations there are either birds or mice or both to be eaten, and all the screen must be cleared before progressing to the next. There are also hazards like night prowlers, witches, ghosts, moggy bashers and the like.

On the fourth screen the pace changes as the fauna vanish, but in the factory there is a large pile of cat food tins to be reached. Each screen has its own graphics to identify it, and in some respects, each screen makes for a different game.

CRITICISM

● '*Catwalk* is a fairly original game that is quite challenging. The graphics are quite good, but not very colourful. Overall the game is good fun to play with 9 screens of feline frolics.'

● *'This game seems to be quite simple at first, and I seemed to play through the first four screens without any trouble whatsoever. But on the fourth screen I got stuck and there was no way I could work my way round it - it needed a little bit more time spent playing on the game, and obviously this does mean there is more difficulty than first appears. The graphics are fairly small in some cases, and quite large in others, but never a balanced combination. Moving jerkily, there were tragic attribute problems. This can be quite serious, depending on the state of your mind, and whether you like purple$red cats from time to time. A quite cheerful demo comes with the game which takes you all the way through, which aids you in explaining how the game is played. Overall, an original game, but although saying this, I don't think it will appeal.'*

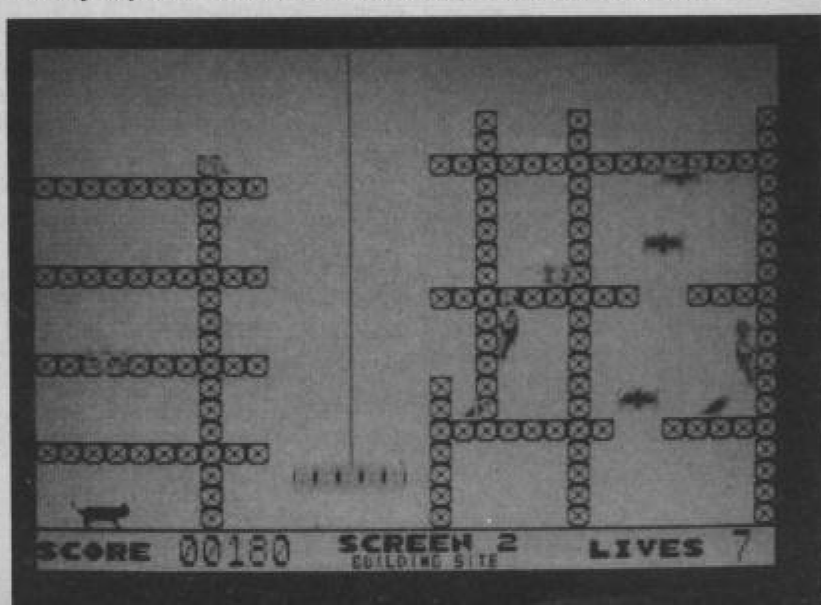
● '*Catwalk* has some very nice touches in the graphics. Your feline hero is quite nicely drawn and pounces with appropriate ferocity. I liked the touch in the first screen, outside the slumbering houses, where numerous objects are hurled at you from the windows pity there's no howling on the sound track. The sound isn't too bad, with a few tunes in between screens and a rendering of 'Three Blind Mice' at the start. Each screen is given a title in the now time-honoured *Jet Set Willy* tradition, but *Catwalk* doesn't really come up to the standard of that game at all. Nevertheless, original, playable but not over addictive.'

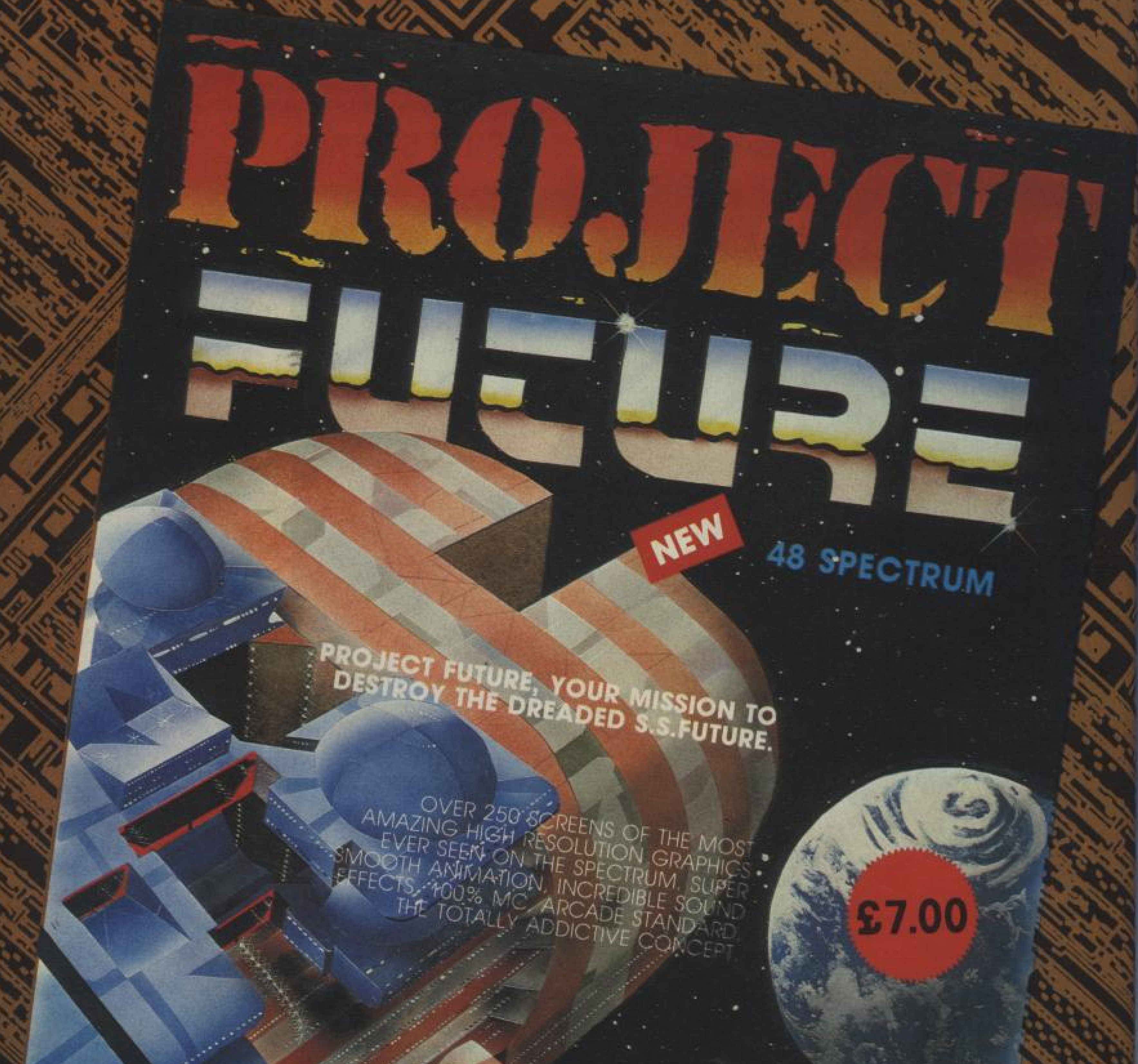
COMMENTS

Control keys: user definable, but seem a little unreliable in selection
Joystick: Kempston, but others through UDK
Keyboard play: fairly responsive
Use of colour: fair to average
Graphics: variable, generally quite good and detailed
Sound: good tunes, some spot effects
Skill levels: 1
Lives: 9
Screens: 9
Special features:
General rating: average.

Use of computer	71%
Graphics	70%
Playability	64%
Getting started	70%
Addictive qualities	45%
Value for money	56%
Overall	**63%**

The alley cat prowls onto screen 2 after some feathered friends in CATWALK.





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THE LAST STARFIGHTER

On December the 12th. an exciting new action film set in space opens in London and should then go on general release thoughout the country in the New Year. The Last Starfighter holds a double interest for CRASH readers - not only is the story set around a shoot em up arcade game, but the film itself uses an extraordinary amount of 'state of the art' computer graphics. ROGER KEAN went to see the film and the amazing effects created by the Cray X-MP supercomputer.

THE STORY

Anyone who has ever played a shoot em up arcade game will be familiar with the hallowed intro, 'You are the last surviving starfighter and alone in your Gunship (equipped with multi-photon laser blasters) you must face the alien hordes in a desperate battle to save the universe. '

This corny situation is exactly what faces young Alex Rogan in Heron Films *The Last Starfighter.* The action is set in deepest space and at the sleepy Starlite Starbrite Trailer Park, a collection of run down mobile homes or, as Alex later describes it to a bewildered alien, mobile caves above ground that don't go anywhere! It is here that the film opens, on just another sleepy day. Alex (winningly played by newcomer **Lance Guest**) finds that his plans for a picnic with his girlfriend Maggie Gordon (**Catherine Mary Stewart**) are scuttled when his mother asks him to stay behind and fix the park's antiquated electrical system. Later in the same day he learns that the bank have turned down his request for a loan to go away to college and with it all his hopes of ever getting away from the shiftless life of the trailer park.

Like any other young man in a similar position, his frustrations boil over as he takes control of the park's sole arcade machine, 'Starfighter' - a test of skill in which the player must destroy the spaceships of 'Xur and the Ko-Dan armada'. Alex, to the astonishment of his little brother Louis (**Chris Herbert**) and the other park residents, knocks out ship after ship, breaking the record.

Later, after everyone has gone to bed, Alex is alone with his thoughts in the night when the Starfighter machine begins to sqawk and then shakes itself into silence. A futuristic vehicle pulls up by the side of the road and a voice from within asks who it was that broke the record on the Starfighter machine. When Alex identifies himself, the vehicle's owner announces that he is the designer of the game and asks Alex to get into the car for a moment. As Alex climbs in, another silent figure leaves by the other door, the doors slam shut and the car rockets off.

The bemused Alex has been kidnapped by a man who introduces himself as Centauri (**Robert Preston**) and he is surprised to learn that the machine is more than a game, it's a test.

Centauri, who is actually a glowing-eyed alien, takes Alex into deepest space, and then into hyperspace, for the vehicle is no ordinary car, and finally they arrive at the planet Rylos, HQ of the intergalactic Star League. In a hangar filled with towering Gun Stars, which he recognises from those in the game, the astonished Alex learns that the video game was designed by the mercenary Centauri to appraise combat skills of prospective Starfighters. What's more, Xur and the Ko-Dan armada are real and are about to break through the giant forcefield which has protected the League for centuries.

All this is heady stuff for Alex, who was



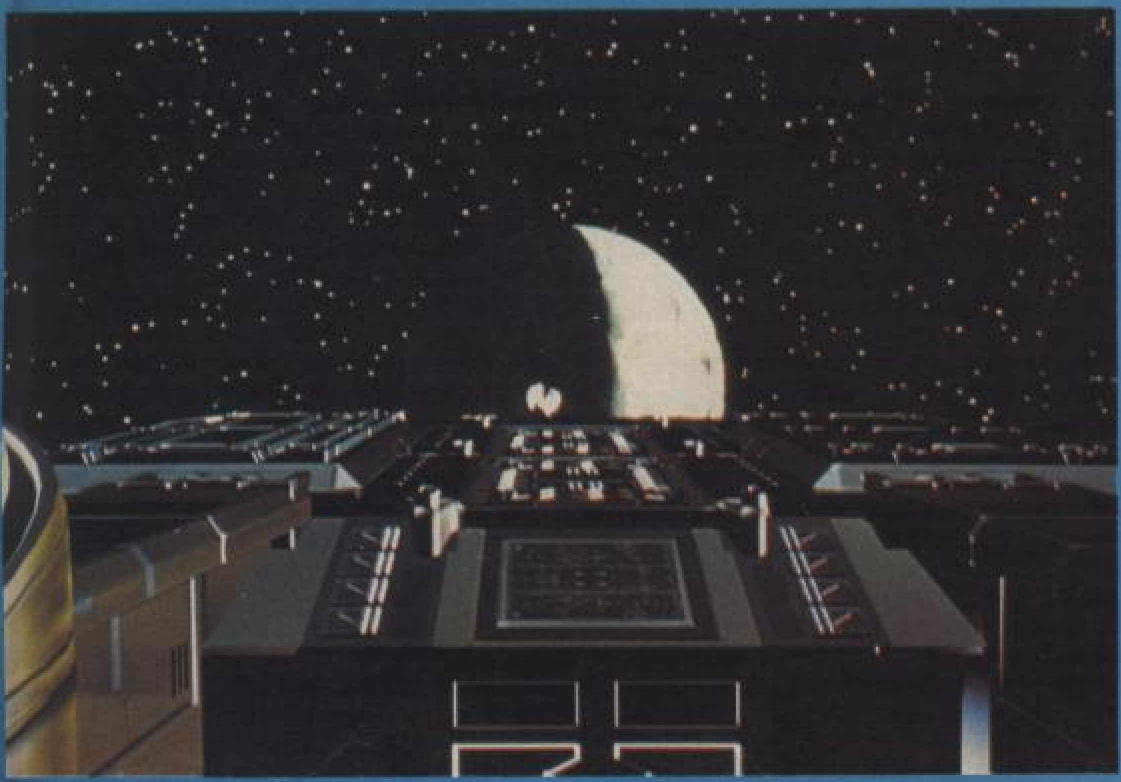
Centauri's Starcar sweeps down out of hyperspace over Rylos.

illegally recruited by Centauri in the first place. Assisted by the sympathetic, lizard- like navigator Grig (**Dan O'Herlihy**), Alex persuades Centauri to take him back to Earth. While they are on the way back, the Ko- Dan fire meteor cannon through the forcefield directed by the traitorous Xur, and the base is all but destroyed.

Back on Earth Alex finds that his place has been taken by the mysterious character who got out of Centauri's vehicle. This is Beta, an android double. But Beta has failed to convince Maggie who is confused by what seems to be a change in Alex. Alex also finds that his life is in danger because the Ko-Dan have discovered that one Starfighter escaped the attack, and they have sent a Zandozan 'hit beast' to kill him. Centauri arrives in the nick of time to save Alex, but is himnself wounded in the shoot out.

Alex is now convinced that he has little alternative and the dying Centauri manages to fly him back to ruined Rylos where only one Gun Star remains intact -







The attacking Gun Star with Alex and Grig at the controls seen in the distance beyond the giant Ko-Dan mothership, with a moon of Rylos in the background. Another amazing scene completely invented within the computer.

Alex Rogan (Lance Guest) takes his frustrations out on the Starfighter video game - and breaks the record.

and Alex is the sole surviving Starfighter.

So, as Beta battles on Earth with the Zandozan to keep his double's whereabouts a secret, Alex Rogan and his navigator Grig set out in the last Gun Star to stage a final battle against the entire K0-Dan fleet, outnumbered a hundred to one, and armed with the Star League's secret weapon, the Death Blossom, that could blow Alex and Grig to smithereens.

THE FILM

As you can see from this brief synopsis, the theme of *The Last Starfighter* revolves heavily around an arcade game, and a very good one it looks too! A lot of elements have been crammed into Starfighter that threaten to turn it into a rather silly joke - that it isn't a joke, and that it turns out to be a satisfying, exciting and funny film is largely due to the skill of the relatively unknown director, **Nick Castle**. He manages to bring touches of Spielberg and George Lucas to *Starfighter*, mixing all the ingredients with a tongue stuck firmly in his cheek.

Credit must also go to the actors, who manage to bring great credibilty to a story which is dealing in the absurd. As the young hero Alex, Lance Guest is a perfect mixture of, 'you can't kid me, ' and' 'Wow!' Dan O'Herlihy's Grig, despite the lizard makeup, is marvellous, as mobile a face as Sir Larry Olivier playing Othello; and Robert Preston's intergalactic con man with a fine line in heroic dialogue and hand firmly on his pay packet seems just right.

But in many respects, the real star of the film is the special effects which have been created inside a computer.

THE SUPER COMPUTER

Aninmated graphics on computers have come a long way in an astonishingly short space of time. The people responsible for *The Last Starfighter's* effects also worked on *Tron*. But if you think there is any similarity between the graphics in *Tron* and those in *The Last Starfighter* - forget it! *The Last Starfighter* is leagues ahead.

The marvels of deep space have been created without miniature props or stop motion - a total of twenty-one minutes, some 230 individual scenes, have been realised by **Digital Scene Simulation**, a process which harnesses the high speed brain power of the **Cray X-MP supercomputer**.

This is the creation of **Digital Productions** of Los Angeles, whose founders **John Whitney** and **Gary Demos field. (Whitney's father designed the famous slit-scan sequence at the climactic end of** *2001 A Space Odyssey*). They have both worked on several films using computers such as *Westworld* and *Futureworld* as well as *Tron*.

Digital Productions was involved in work on *The Last Starfighter from the script stage to produce photo-realistic special effects. What this basically means is that the computer was used to create effects similar to those in films like Star Wars instead of using hundreds of technicians and complex film process work which can take up to three years.*

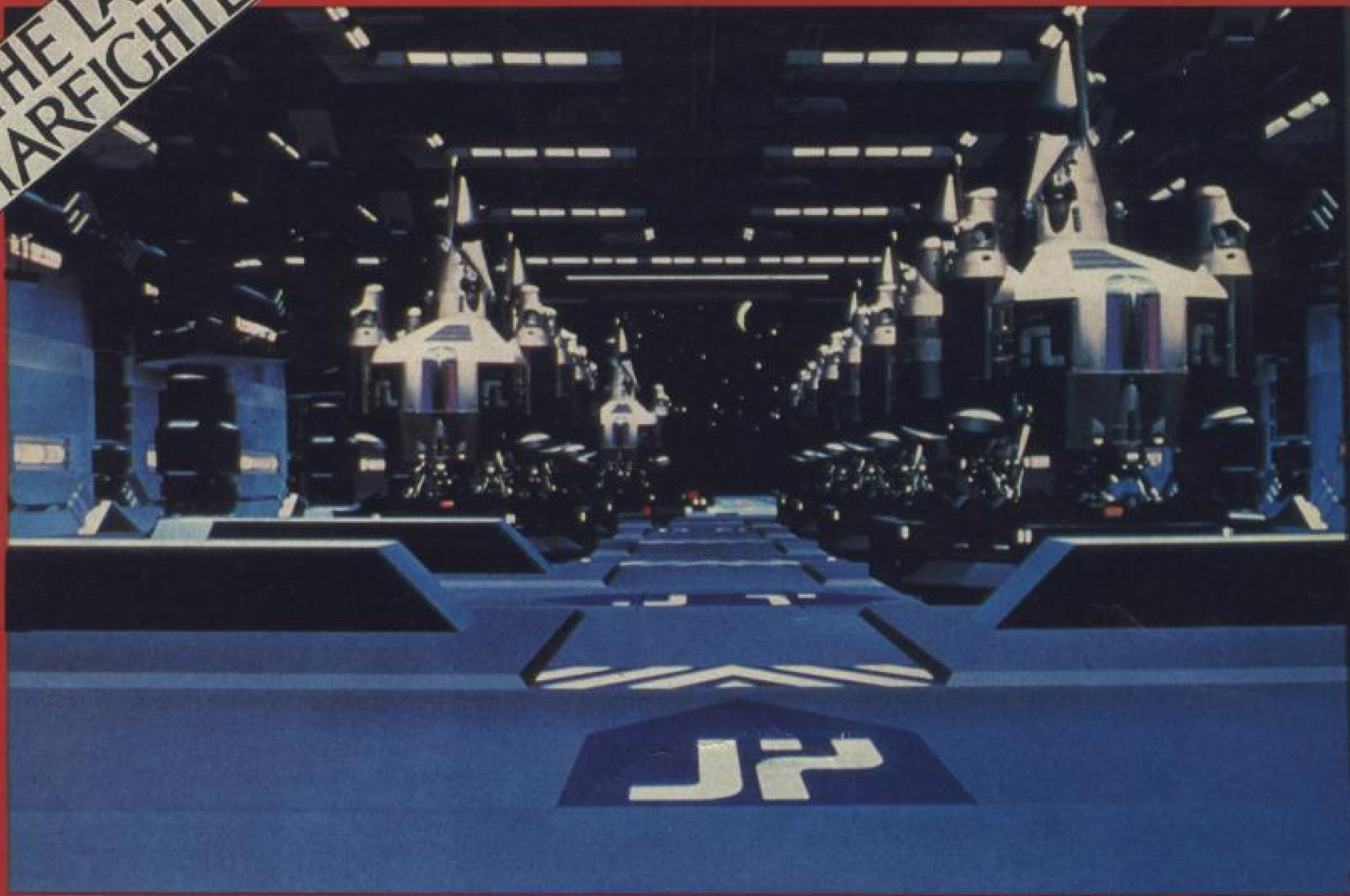
Using an encoding table and an interactive cursor (an electronic tracing pad) the base drawings by designer **Ron Cobb** were converted into 'polygons' - the numerous flat surface units that make up the flat and curved parts of an object being 'digitised' inside the computer. These drawings are flat plan views, but from them a physical, three-dimensional object can be created in the computer.

Once all these 'blueprints' have been modelled inside the computer, they can be put into action - they can be choreographed. As Whitney says, 'You can go in and make the action in a scene conform to the director's feeling about creating dramatic points of view. The computer synthesises the camera point of view - it's like working with an imaginary camera that has no mass that can fly where it wants to. '

The objects are viewed on two different monitors, black-and-white for the line drawing, and colour for the lighting and colour. And since all the elements are really inside a computer, nothing has been built or scaled, actions can be rehearsed again and again until they are perfect without an inch of film being wasted. As **Sherry McKenna**, Digital Productions' executive producer for *Last Starfighter* says, 'In traditional special effects you would get back all the various elements on separate pieces of film; you would never get to see them together until the end, and then you would say, That's not what I wanted. With Digital Scene Simulation, you can look at the monitor and say, No, I want the deck fighter to move faster. I want the planey farther away. '

After all the objects are lit and

THE LAST STARFIGHTER



Gun Stars tower above Alex in the Rylan hangar deep inside the HQ of the intergalactic Star League. In this shot the computer handles an incredible 4, 000, 000 polygons per film frame.





'choreographed' and colour checked, the digital information is converted to film. The instructions are loaded into a shot cue which is fed into the Cray. The computer talks to a device called a film recorder, a movie camera which looks at light computed by the Cray. And lo and behold flying cars, planets and spaceships have all been synthesised out of thin air!

Digital Productions created their footage in a mere twelve months - a feat made possible by the Cray X-MP with its capability of a billion computations per second, and revolutionary new software. 'The comnputer system that Gary Demos and I worked with in 1981 operated at a rate that would have taken 24 years to produce the quantity and quality of footage seen in *The Last Starfighter*, ' Whitney notes. 'There has been a gigantic leap since Tron. Tron had an average of 7, 000 polygons per film frame in its five minutes of simulation; it took three different companies a year and a half to make that five minutes. *The Last Starfighter* has an average of 350, 000 to 400, 000 polygons per frame, with some scenes like the Rylan hangar peaking at 4, 000, 000 polygons. ' (See colour picture).

So, are we going to see more an more films using techniques like these? It seems likely - cost for one thing. Computer graphics on this scale may still be fabulously expensive, but in an industry which spends tens of millions of dollars on a film's effects, the cost of computer graphics is very effective. The marvels of deep space in *The Last Starfighter* are only the beginning for Digital Productions according to John Whitney.

'It's my prediction that, in five years, you're going to see all kinds of images - interior set locations, special effects, props, the likenesses of creatures, simulation of human performers in medium and long shots - all produced in the camera. '

But while computers are breaking new ground in the manufacturing of motion pictire images, the human factor remains critical. 'The cleverness and innovativeness that the creative team brings to the table is the most exciting part, and that's the part that you can never, ever automate, ' says Whitney. 'Computer graphics are not taking the burden away from human beings - it's still on our shoulders. '

For anyone interested in computer games *The Last Starfighter* is an exciting and often wryly amusing film because of its arcade game theme. But a sight of the kinds of graphics generated by the computer should have its own excitement - perhaps a glimpse of what we might be marvelling at sooner than you think in the home.



The Last Starfighter opens on December 12th at the Leicester Square Theatre, London. Running time 100 minutes, rating: PG



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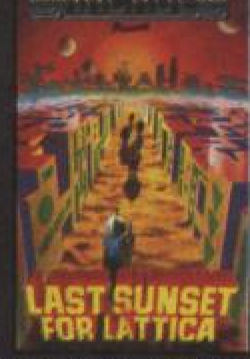
A ☐ I enclose a cheque for £________ or
B ☐ debit my Barclaycard/Access Account★
C ☐ Name ________
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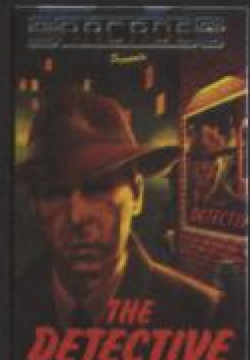
A
Fast-furious racing in this Arcade game for the Spectrum. 'Pontoon' on side B free!



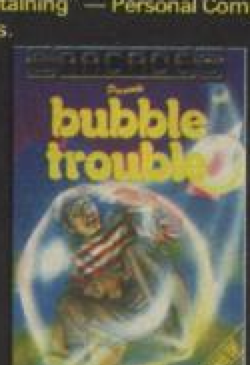
B
Funny goings-on deep in a mine. Can you escape the evil in its depths? "Original and fun . . . . dexterity needed . . . . strategy is also involved" — Games Computing.



C
Defuse a bomb hidden on the complex planet, Lattica, before it blows!! ". . . action packed game . . . addictive" — Sinclair user.



D
The mobs out to get ya' in this no-holds-barred 25 screen, action-packed game. "Tricky and highly entertaining" — Personal Computing News.



E
50 different screens of mayhem." "A fun game for all ages . . . . which I thoroughly enjoyed." — Home Computing Weekly.

Crash Competition

50 COPIES OF

BEACH-HEAD

TO BE WON

U.S. GOLD



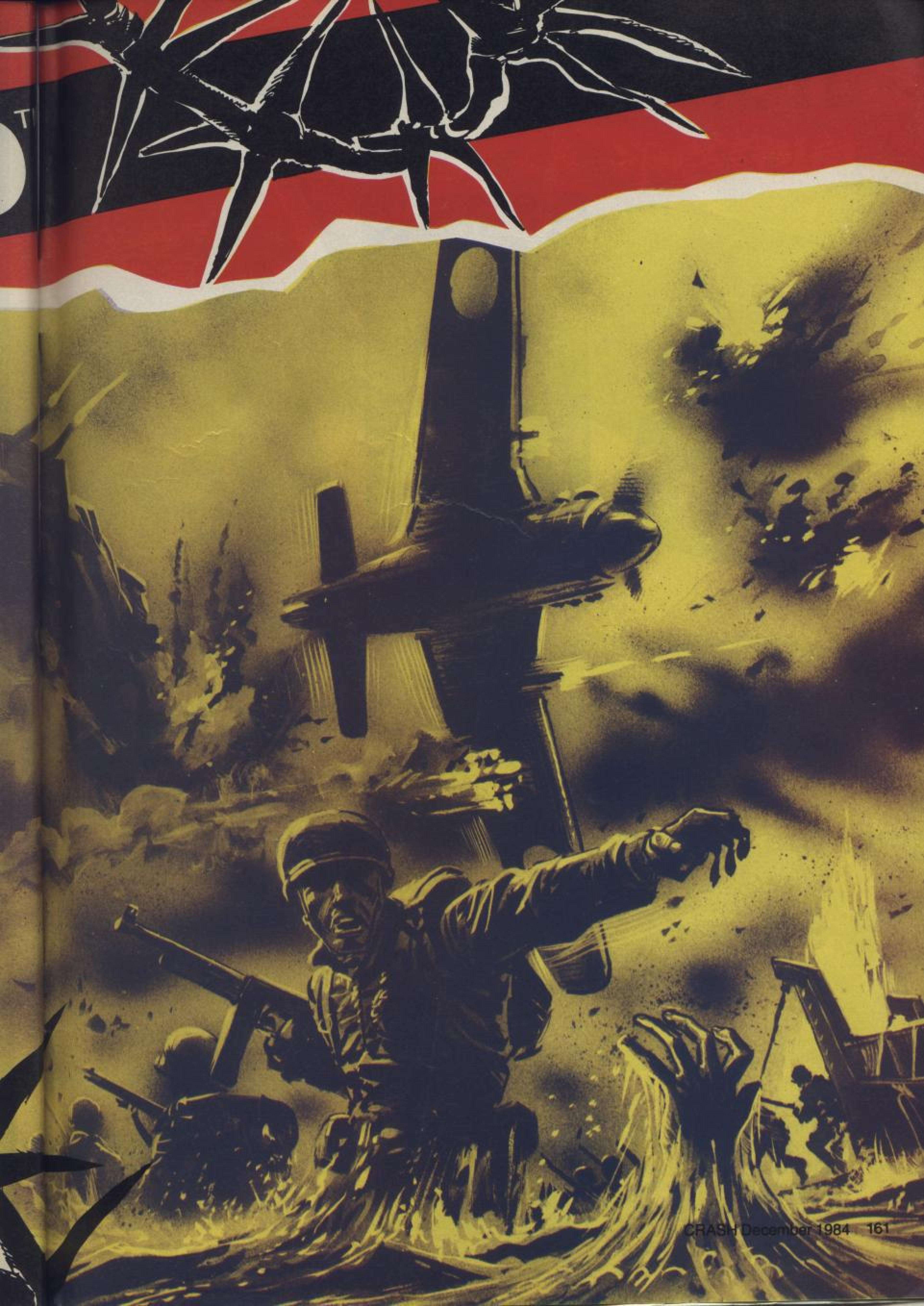
FIRST OUT in the fabulous new range of games from **US GOLD** for the Spectrum is *BEACH-HEAD*, which was reviewed in last month's issue of CRASH. Now U.S. GOLD are offering CRASH readers a chance to get down to the beach in battle fatigues and claw a foothold on the enemy-held island, establish a beach-head, consolidate and then destroy the enemy!

With its detailed graphics and sound effects, it's almost possible to believe you are really there, in the thick of the cordite and shrapnel in *Beach-Head*. The game, the officially licensed version of the American original hit, is the forerunner to many other exciting American games heading your way soon from U.S. GOLD. These new attractions include the famous *Zaxxon* as well as *Bruce Lee*, *F-15 Strike Eagle*, *Solo Flight* and *Blue Max*. With all this flying and shooting to do, what better than to get some practice in on *Beach-Head* courtesy of U.S. GOLD and win yourself a copy right now?!

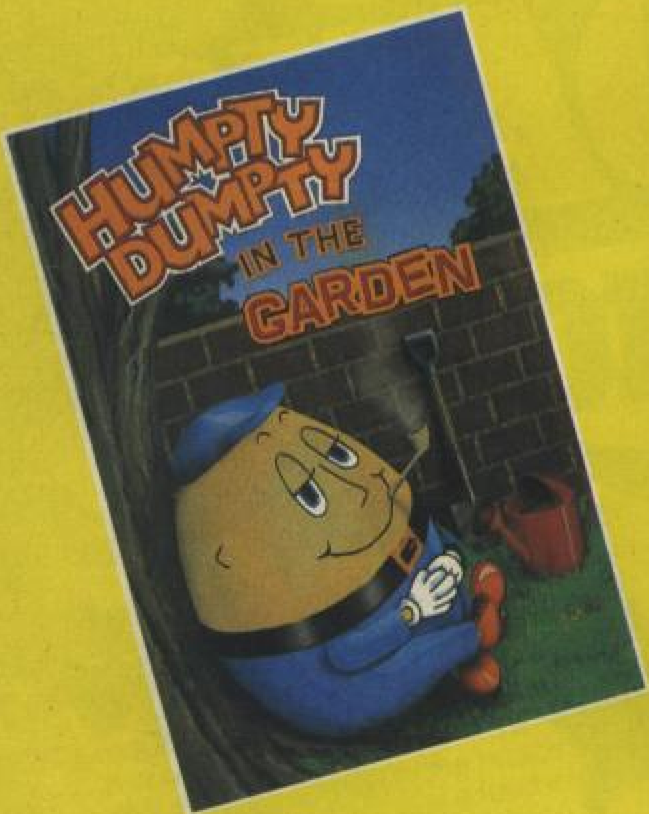
It isn't difficult either – CRASH readers are now well known for their superior answering power on our difficult competitions. But if you're feeling a mite under par today, help is not far away – last month's issue in fact! Answer the questions printed below and send them in on a postcard (or the outside of a sealed envelope) to: **US GOLD COMPETITION, CRASH MAGAZINE, PO BOX 10, LUDLOW, SHROPSHIRE SY8 1DB** to arrive no later than first post **December 7**.

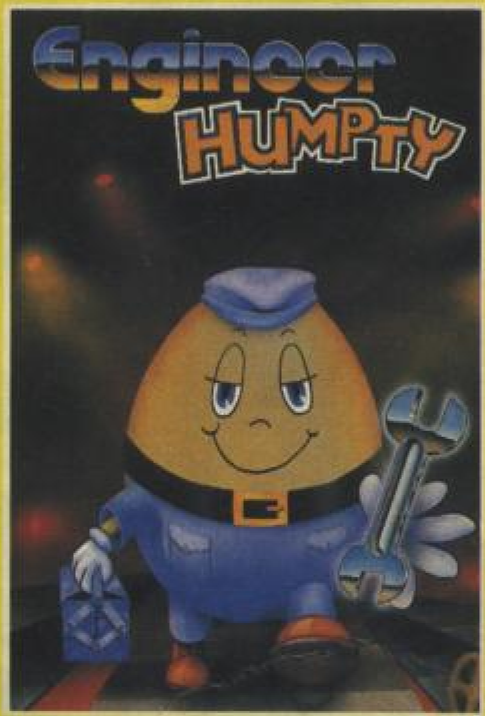
U.S. GOLD COMPETITION

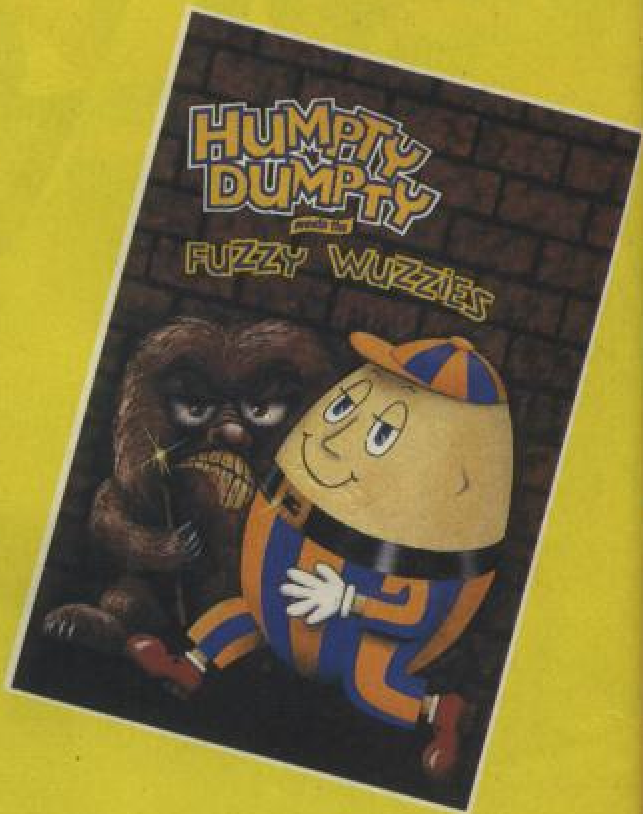
1. *Beach-Head* is a translation from what other computer?
2. How many 'stages' make up the game in *Beach-Head*?
3. What infests the 'Hidden Passage'?
4. On page 14 of the November issue, how many times does the word **Beach-Head** or **beach-head** appear?
5. What do you have to do in the 'final stage' of the game?
6. On the beach-head' itself, what weapons do you control?



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The Fall Guy

Colt Seavers is a top Hollywood stuntman who uses the extraordinary skills he displays before the camera when moonlighting as a modern Bounty Hunter, who apprehends and brings in Bail Bond jumpers. Colt is ably assisted by his would-be manager Howie, his beautiful stuntgirl protege, Jody, and Terri the lady from the Bail Bond Company, who hires Colt when he's not before the cameras.

The cast of characters is:

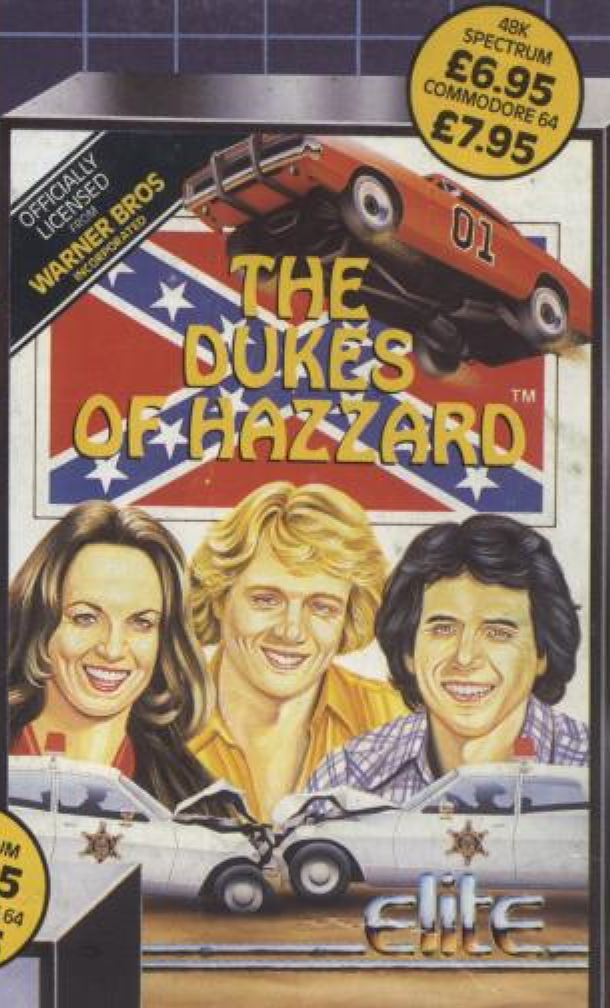
Colt Seavers	LEE MAJORS
Jody Banks	HEATHER THOMAS
Howie Munson	DOUG BARR
Terri Micheals	MARKIE POST

The Dukes of Hazzard

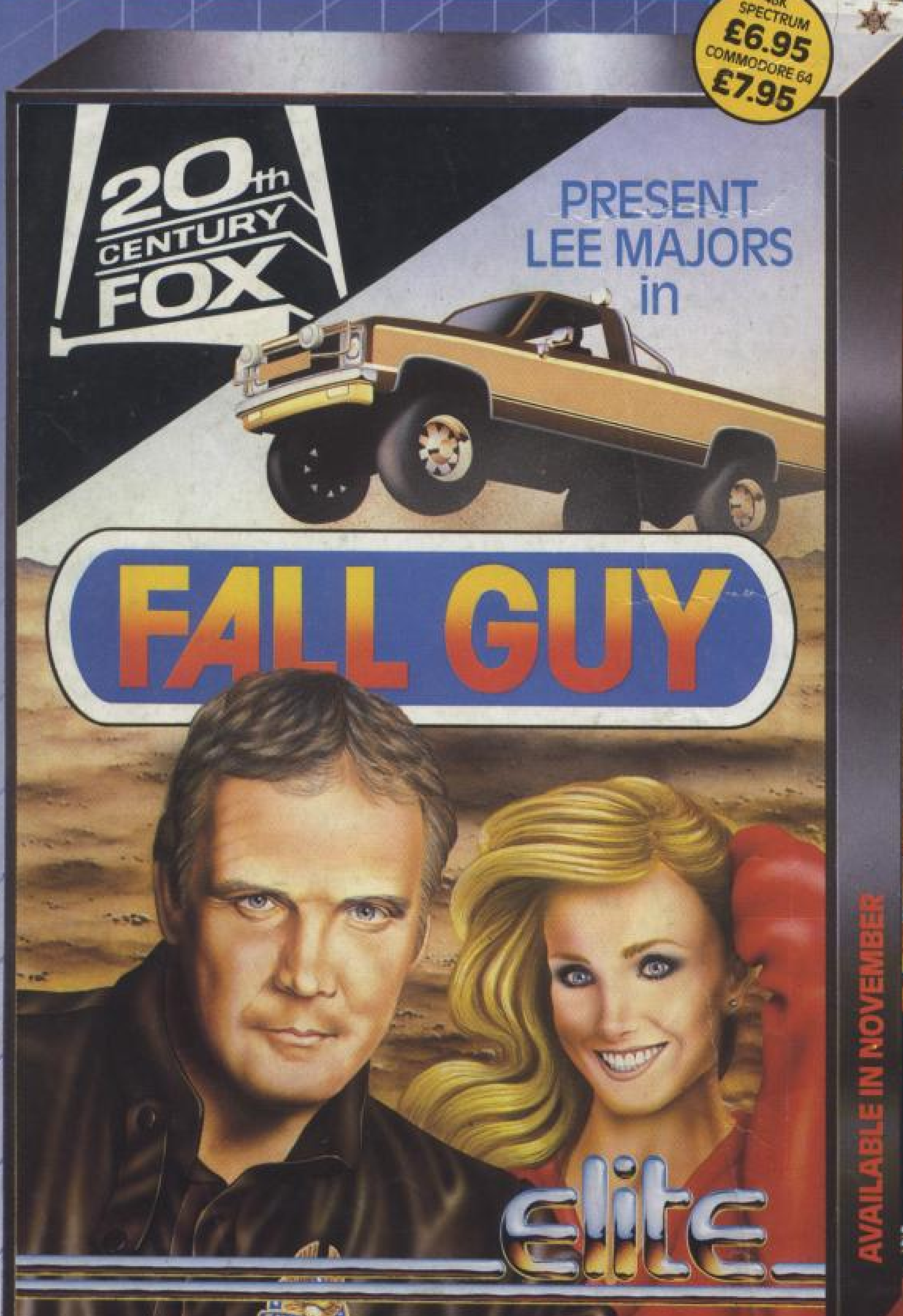
Its the 4th of July and as usual the Duke family want to have their annual party. The essential ingredient to make the party a success is moonshine, so its up to Bo and Luke Duke to take the General Lee and fetch the moonshine Uncle Jessie Duke has left scattered throughout the county. The problem is that Boss Hogg knows about the Duke Boys plans and has sent Roscoe and company out to stop the Boys collecting the moonshine.

Kokotoni Wilf

As Kokotoni Wilf you must recover all of the pieces of the legendary Dragon Amulet (which has been scattered through time) for your master the great magician 'Ulrich'. Throughout the quest Wilf comes up against many dangers from huge Prehistoric Dinosaurs to hostile alien Robots, but the reward for recovering all of the pieces warrants the risk. 60 plus screen settings in genuine high resolution make 'Kokotoni Wilf' an arcade adventure worthy of comparison with Jet Set Willy.



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